

LIFE BEYOND DEATH



MR. NAL. KANTH GHOSE

REDISCOVERING INDIA

LIFE BEYOND DEATH

GHOSH M.K.

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INTRODUCTION

Spiritualism was first brought before the American public in the year 1848 by the Fox Sisters, and it was introduced in India some years after by my revered uncle Mahatma Sisir Kumar. The first circle was held by us in our native village Amrita Bazar in 1864, and in the fourth sitting the spirit of my uncle Hira Lal appeared and carried on conversation with us through my uncle Moti Lal. It was Moti Lal who first developed mediumistic powers in our family circle. Subsequently my father Hemanta Kumar became a medium for automatic writing like Mr. Stead, though he acquired the power several years before the latter. My father's sister Sthira Soudaminee and his cousin Sasimukhee became first class clairvoyant mediums.

When the accounts of these seances were communicated to some of our Calcutta friends they published them in the local newspapers with the result that an immense sensation was created throughout the length and breadth of the land. The news spread like wild fire from town to village, from village to hamlet, that the Amrita Bazar people had succeeded in communicating with the dead. We were besieged with enquiries, and circles began to be held almost everywhere in the country.

The primary object of publishing the Bengali book on spiritualism, *Paraloker Katha*, was to keep a permanent record of the seances held in our family circles and of other supernatural manifestations which occurred during a period of seventy years. At that time I never dreamt that there would be such a demand for the book, though I entertained a cheering hope in the innermost recesses of my heart that, the book might be of service in alleviating the misery and pain of bereaved parents and relatives to a certain extent, and in that case my labours would not have been in

vain and I should have considered myself extremely fortunate.

Through the grace of God the demand for the book was so great that in the course of three months the first edition was exhausted, and the second, though twice in number, is expected to run out in about six months more. This is a sure indication of how the people are eager to know definitely if there is really life after death and whether we shall be able to meet again our departed dear ones in the next world.

Since the publication of the book numerous enquiries have been addressed to me regarding the existence of life after death, and many bereaved people, both men and women, have come to see me, even from the remote mofussil, with a view to getting into touch with the spirits of their departed dear and near ones.

One morning as I was sitting in my office room, a young lady, about 30 years old, appeared before me with her baby in her arms. Her aspect was so mournful and woe-begone that I at once concluded that she was suffering from some heavy calamity. Her first question was, "Are you Mr. Iqbal Babu?" On my answering in the affirmative, she related the following story :

"Eight months ago I lost my 7-year old son. This was followed by the death of my husband only four months ago, and now I am left with this little girl as my only crumb of comfort. My father, a retired high official of the Government, my father-in-law, a well-known vakil of a sub-division of Rungpur, my mother and mother-in-law are all living, but I don't get peace of mind anywhere. Having read your *Paraloker Katha*, I have hastened to you to know how I can believe in the existence of my departed husband and son, and if I shall be really re-united with them hereafter." When she related the story, my heart bled and I could hardly restrain my tears.

Another lady, wife of a high official of the Tripura State, having lost her son, wrote to me a most pathetic letter, the translation of a portion of which is as follows :

"About two months ago, our son aged 12 years and 10 months, left this world. He suffered for 4 years continually previous to his death, first from typhoid and then from rheumatic fever. Finally, his heart was affected, and in spite of the best medical aid, he succumbed. His body and soul were kept together during the last two years, only by careful and tender nursing. On the afternoon of the 23rd Jaista (6th June 1933) last, he had slight fever which persisted without intermission for 4 days. On the 27th afternoon his temperature rose very high, but he kept on talking as usual till 11 p.m. I had my 3-month old baby, Benu, on my lap, and my son asked me to go to bed with her. I did so and within a short time fell fast asleep and slept like a log of wood till early morning. On waking up, I was shocked to find that my sick son had departed this world during my sleep. Alas, I do not know how and when his life became extinct. Perhaps he had called me and asked for a drop of water in his death agony. The very thought that I was not awake at the time is haunting me. Your book was read out to me. Is it true that my son still exists in after-life? Shall I again meet him? Will he again call me 'Mother'? Will he again ask me for food when hungry?"

So, the knowledge, whether man lives after death or not is more important and useful to him than any other. In short, the altruist who proves that man lives and does not lose his identity after death, will be the greatest benefactor of mankind. For, if there is life after death, that is to say, if death is only a migration to another world, then more than three-fourths of the misery of man will be gone. It is said that the world is a vale of tears. Certainly it is so, if life ends here. But if there is survival after death and if it is a life of progression, it will be the easiest thing to prove that life and death are a great blessing, and that all worldly misery is evanescent.

The man, therefore, who has the knowledge, that this world is only a temporary abode, and that he will live for ever and ever in a better place after death,

has no need to be cast down by any worldly misery. Such a knowledge is therefore more valuable to him than any other gift of God. Our object is to prove that there is an after and better life.

There are two classes of men, one with a religious and the other with an intellectual turn of mind. Those who are of a religious turn of mind—and in India such men form the bulk of the community,—are easily persuaded into a belief in the immortality of soul by a simple appeal to their religious sentiment. A man with a strong religious instinct feels in this way: There is no doubt that God exists, and it is also evident that He is all-wise. Man is His best creation. Is it possible that He created such a wonderful piece of mechanism only to be broken up and reduced to dust? Again, God can never be cruel. If there be no continued existence, death becomes the greatest calamity that can befall man, but death is the destiny of every man. Can God be so cruel? How few are the men who are cruel enough to snatch away for ever a son from the bosom of his mother? But God apparently is doing this every moment. Either God must be more cruel than His creature man, or He never parts mother from son for good, that is, He unites all loving hearts in the next world.

Those with an intellectual turn of mind want facts, and it is by facts alone that the immortality of soul can be proved to them. We would rather begin with the latter, that is, with those who want facts to establish their faith in an after-existence.

We have another reason why we prefer to deal first with facts, such as have a bearing on the subject. An appeal to the teachings of the Prophets may exert some influence upon the faith of the believer, but they will have no effect whatsoever upon sceptics and non-believers. On the other hand, facts are irresistible and will force the mental and the intellectual faculties. It will be simply impossible for a reasonable man to reject facts which are established upon unimpeachable testimony, be he a sceptic or a believer.

We have said before that to prove the survival of life after death is to prove that most of the miseries that we suffer from are negligible. We shall try to prove, conclusively, if possible, that to prove the survival of life after death, is to prove that the destiny of man is indescribably high and happy. Those who admit the propositions laid down above, are also bound to admit that a knowledge of the existence of after-life is more valuable to man than any other; and therefore, his supreme duty is to ascertain for himself whether continued existence is a reality or a fiction. Yet the average man will not only not make any attempt to hold the inquiry but on the other hand pursue the man, who tries to do so, with ridicule. In short, a man who experiments upon this subject is considered a crank, superstitious and fat-witted, not fit to be called an intelligent and rational being.

Faith in an after-life, based upon religious considerations, rarely goes beyond the stage of aspiration. For, belief is of two kinds. A man has an aspiration, that there must be an after-existence. But this man does not derive much benefit from a mere hope of an after-existence. For, though he freely confesses that he believes in the existence of a good God, and the existence of a good God and annihilation after death are not reconcilable propositions, yet he will suffer all the pangs of bereavement, when a dear one is snatched away from him. This is because his faith has not gone beyond the stage of belief.

In short, a man becomes really happy when his belief has gone beyond the stage of aspiration and crystallized into conviction. A man who is convinced of the existence of an after-life, will consider death as merely a journey home. He regards death more as the bride regards her marriage, which takes her to her husband's home. To elucidate it farther, it is one thing to entertain a belief in the existence of an after-world, and quite a different thing to have positive knowledge of this all-important fact. The man who has this positive knowledge will not fear death or

the miseries of the world and will not shed a drop of tear at the death of even his dearest object on earth. What, therefore, is wanted is a conviction—a positive knowledge—of survival after death. How to obtain this conviction? Mere belief in the existence of a good God will scarcely enable one to earn this blessing. To be able to secure this conviction one must enquire, observe and analyse facts. Experiments have shewn the existence of X-rays. In the same manner, experiments alone can convince one of the survival of man after death. Of course, there are eminently pious men to whom this knowledge comes by intuition, but their number is very limited.

Unluckily for mankind, men devoted to the study of science, think it derogatory to their dignity to enquire into subjects which are considered or called occult. Nay, they think it still more derogatory to admit that facts have convinced them of the existence of a next world. In short, very few scientific men will admit that they have made any enquiry whatever into this all-important subject; and fewer still will acknowledge that the enquiry has convinced them of the existence of a spiritual world beyond the shadowy gates of death, though they got conclusive proof to satisfy themselves and allay their doubts.

Many Hindus entertain the notion that men come into this world and die to be born again. Thus they continue to come and go, until they are finally liberated; and when liberated, they are merged into the Deity, and it is then that they lose their identity. If they had a meritorious life, they are rewarded in their next birth; if it is otherwise, they are punished. This theory means that there is no real survival after death. For if A, after death, loses his identity and becomes B, no union of loving hearts can be possible. But the Vedas, the highest authority of the Hindus, advocate the immortality of the soul and the re-union of loving hearts.

There are few problems so important to man as the two which spiritualism has taken upon itself to

solve. The problems are,—whether there is life after death, and whether there is re-union of loving hearts in the other world. But there is another problem which is of even greater importance than those which spiritualism has taken upon itself to solve. Ordinary spiritualism has ignored this problem, it is Hindu spiritualism which has tackled it and is fully prepared to solve it. Spiritualism has proved that men live after death and that loving hearts are re-united and live together. But it does not take cognisance of another question more important,—how long do they live together and in what manner? It does not and cannot prove that they do not live in the same manner for ever and ever.

Who knows that man, after a stay of some years in the spiritual world,—may be for thousands of years,—would not be extinguished, or be forced to come back to earth, or to be born again elsewhere? And then it is not enough to know that men live after death; would they live happy after death? This world is called the vale of tears; is the other world like this, or better? Some spirits declare that they are happy, but others say they are not. How is a man to determine what will ensure him a happy life in the next world?

One of the most wonderful mediums that ever appeared in Europe was D. D. Home. Here is the account of a seance at which he was the medium. Says he :

“I have seen a pencil lifted by a hand to a paper and write, in the presence of the Emperor Napoleon. We were in a large room—the Solon Louis Guinze. The Empress sat here, the Emperor there, the table was moved to an angle of more than 45 degrees. Then a hand was seen to come. It was a very beautifully formed hand. There were pencils on the table. It lifted, not the one next it, but one on the far right. We heard the sound of writing, and saw it writing on notepaper. The hand passed before me, and went to the Emperor, and he kissed the hand. It went to the Empress, she withdrew from the touch and the hand

followed her. The Emperor said: 'Do not be frightened, do kiss it'; and she then kissed it. It was disappearing. I said: 'I would like to kiss it.' The hand seemed to be like that of a person thinking, and as if it were saying 'Shall I?' It came back to me, and I kissed it. The sensation of touch and pressure was that of a natural hand. It was as much a material hand seemingly as my hand is now. The writing was an autograph of the Emperor Napoleon I. The hand was his hand, small and beautiful, as it is known to have been."

So, it seems, Napoleon the Great is not in hell. And why? We have seen that a man who committed one single act of murder suffers the tortures of hell in the spirit-world, but Napoleon was the cause of the death of millions of men. Still we find him not badly off. We have seen a man in the spirit-world, who never did one single meritorious act in his life talking and laughing. We have seen a woman who went astray, poor thing, seduced by a designing scoundrel, beating her breast and tearing her hair in the spirit-world, yet a Gay Lothario shewing no signs of suffering. What, then, are the laws which govern to make life in the other world happy? That is the greatest problem which man has to solve to ensure his future happiness. In short, spiritualism does not or cannot prove the following propositions. It has been ascertained beyond doubt that man lives after death, but does he live for ever? If he lives after death, how is he to make his existence happy? The second question, when analysed, will stand thus: (1) Is there a moral government of the world? (2) Is there a God who takes note of the affairs of men and who punishes the disloyal and rewards the loyal? (3) What are the laws one must obey to please God?

These are questions which spiritualism cannot answer, and until these questions are answered, the destiny of man must remain in some uncertainty. But Hindu spiritualism has solved them satisfactorily. Because men failed to solve the problems referred to

above, Messiahs come down upon earth to solve them. There are several religious systems in the world, introduced by Messiahs or Avatars. The sacred books of the Hindus teach us that the Avatar of God is not only a fact but is founded on a law of nature. That, whenever there is necessity that man should be taught certain things which he cannot find out for himself, Avatars of God come down to teach man. Under the caption of "Lord Gouranga the Greatest Psychic," we have dealt with the theory of incarnation elaborately.

Now, ordinarily it must strike one as ridiculous that God Almighty, the Creator of innumerable worlds, should appear before men and hold converse with them; but a little consideration will show that there is nothing impossible in the supposition, at least to one who is a spiritualist. It is common knowledge that in the lives of Messiahs, such as Jesus Christ, Mahommed and others, cases of obsession occurred frequently. The law is that like attracts like. In spiritualism we find the same thing. When the medium is a pure-minded person he is possessed by a higher spirit. These higher spirits never obsess for selfish purposes; they come down only to do good to humanity.

We have now formed an idea of the cardinal truths of spiritualism and its close relation to the religious doctrines. It is specially true of the Hindu system which is permeated with this idea. Our book fully deals with all these theories as well as incidents demonstrating their truths. Spiritualism contains nothing of dogmatism, but is based on experimented truths. It acknowledges the fundamental truths of the different systems of religion and makes it possible for men to know their destinies after death. It investigates into some metaphysical truths of human life and solves them satisfactorily. What will become of a man after his death?—is the primary question which vexes the human mind. It answers it and in addition deals with the state of human beings in after-life, of their mode of living and characters of their existence, of their possibility of re-union with their dear ones.

Lastly, spiritualism bows down to the teachings of the Messiahs or Avatars, when they preach to mankind to solve the mysteries and enigmas of life and after, which have remained unanswered. Thus it is a study of truths, pure, absolute and experimented.

In writing this book, I have received considerable help from S^j. Sukumar Sen Gupta, Secretary, Calcutta Psychological Society, and also from S^j. Debendra Chandra Mullick, a senior Advocate, Calcutta High Court, and the veteran literateur and the well-known translator of Bankim Chandra's "Chandrasekhar" in English and editor of Ram Sharma's Poetical Works.

M. K. GHOSH.

Calcutta, Nov., 1, 1934.

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LIFE BEYOND DEATH

PART I

CHAPTER I.

OUR FAMILY AFFAIRS

It is nearly 75 years now that we lived in our native village, Palua-Magura (now Amrita Bazar), in the district of Jessore, in easy competence. My great-grand-father, Padma Lochan Ghosh, was then alive. He had then three sons and four daughters living, of whom the eldest, Hari Narayan, was a pleader at Jessore with a substantial practice. All the various Hindu pujahs and festivals indicative of prosperous circumstances were held in our house. Many families of ample sufficiency also lived in the village. Several of its inhabitants earned decently; some worked in the indigo factories of the district, others in the zemindari sheristas or in Government offices. Almost every one had land of his own for homestead and agriculture, and no one was in real want of food and clothing. A hundred mouths were fed daily in our house, and almost every day there was some festival or other. My grand-father, Hari Narayan, used to come home from Jessore every Saturday after court-hours and spend the week-end in music, indoor games and other amusements.

Hoary-headed Padma Lochan was spending the evening of his life in perfect domestic peace and tranquillity, when the sudden death of his eldest son, Hari Narayan, at the age of 54, after a brief illness, came as a bolt from the blue and the whole household was plunged in mourning. Hari Narayan left behind

eight sons, three daughters, three daughters-in-law and two or three grand-children, besides his old father, widowed wife and relatives, to mourn his loss. My grand-mother, Amritamayee, came to live in her father-in-law's house at the early age of nine. She had been passing a happy life with no bereavement, and, when the first shock came with the death of her husband, she was overwhelmed with grief and all the efforts of her affectionate children failed to enliven her broken heart. Her fifth son, Hira Lal, who was most deeply attached to her, was naturally most affected at his mother's condition. With his mother, he too practically gave up food and sleep, and though his own heart was broken, he tried in every possible way to console her.

Hira Lal's heart was very tender, and the woes and sufferings of any living creature cut him to the quick. He always tried to alleviate them, but he could not always do as he liked. In sheer mortification he would sometimes exclaim : "If I cannot remove others' sorrows, what's the good of living this life?" This feeling grew stronger and stronger in him every day till it overpowered him. At last, Hira Lal put an end to his life by hanging himself. He was then barely eighteen years old.

Amritamayee's First Taste of Son's Death

The second bereavement of my grand-mother in the loss of her son Hira Lal followed her husband's death after an interval of only two years and a half. The first occurred in Paus 1269 B.S., the last in Sraban 1272 B.S.

The loss of her constant companion and dearest son completely upset Amritamayee. Stricken with grief unbearable, she made up her mind to end her own life in the same way. She made no secret of her determination and openly expressed it to her eldest son, Basanta Kumar. Basanta Kumar in his efforts to

soothe his disconsolate mother, explained to her about a life beyond and of a re-union over there.

His point was brief but telling. "Do we feel sorrow, mother," said he, "at the absence of our relatives who have gone abroad and are due to come back? Why should we, then, grieve for our dear departed ones, if we firmly believe we shall meet them after death?" The argument went home, and he ended by saying: "If we find no convincing proof of an after-life and re-union, not you alone should end your life but we all shall be equally ready to follow Hira Lal."

Mahatma Sisir Kumar writes about this incident in the "Hindu Spiritual Magazine", edited by him :

We were eight brothers and devotedly loved one another. One of our brothers suddenly died, and this had a tremendous effect upon the entire family. Was it for this that God implanted love in the human breast? Was it for this that He gave life? The fact was, we were trained under religious principles, and had a strong faith in the existence and goodness of our Creator. Indeed, the brother who had died, had committed suicide from morbid religious feelings. He had imbibed Methodistical doctrines from the Bramhoism of those days which largely drew its instincts from Christian Methodism. Our brother felt that he had committed sin and would commit more as he grew up and that his best course would be to put an end to his life. For a few months he suffered from melancholia and then, one day, he hanged himself. Our faith in God received a rude shock when the incident happened. If God gave life and love to man and then destined man for annihilation,—if He implanted love in the human breast and destined man to suffer the severe pangs of bereavement, He must be the most cruel Being in existence. Surely a man, unless he were a monster, would never snatch a child from the bosom of its mother. This God was doing constantly; was God more cruel than His creation, man? If there was survival and re-union after death it was all right, otherwise what was the use of living at all? Let the entire family put an end to their lives once for all, and put an end to their misery. Thus the entire family felt in the anguish of their soul.

The fact of the matter is that Basanta Kumar and

his brothers had just then heard of the means adopted in America to get into communication with the departed souls of men and even to carry on conversation with them. Having learnt that the ways and means were detailed in some books, Sisir Kumar resolved to know all about them. He was even ready to proceed to America if it was necessary for the purpose. Coming to Calcutta, he went to see the librarian of the Bengal Library (now the Imperial Library), the late Peary Chand Mitter, a man then well-known in the city. Peary Chand was greatly impressed with the earnestness of young Sisir Kumar. He got him enlisted as a subscriber to the Library and supplied him with all the books on occult science that were available. These books were of a practical character and contained instructions as how to hold 'circles' and invoke spirits. In these books, as also in the association of Peary Chand who himself had been a keen student of spiritualism, Sisir Kumar found his first impetus to spiritualism.

CHAPTER II.

OUR HOME CIRCLES

Returning home equipped with these precious volumes, Sisir Kumar made arrangements for forming a spiritual circle on American lines. A clean room was selected for the purpose. Shortly before dusk, circling a round table sat the four brothers, Basanta Kumar, Hemanta Kumar, Sisir Kumar and Moti Lal, and their mother and sisters, each touching the hand of the other sitting next on either side, thus forming a complete unbroken circle. The door of the room was bolted from within, to ensure against intrusion into the room during the sitting.

Their hearts had been lacerated and were yet bleeding by the death of Hira Lal. All their worldly

happiness—even their very lives—depended on the result of the seance, as they were all determined to give up their lives, if no evidence of the survival of the soul after death were forthcoming. In such a frame of mind they began with a sacred hymn sung with the utmost fervour.



MAHATMA SISIR KUMAR GHOSH.

Died on 10-1-11 (17th Paus, 1317) at the age of 72.

A little while later, Sisir Kumar stood up and spoke thus: "If any spirit has descended here, let it give an indication by some means or other." Immediately after, a tapping was heard on the floor

and every one was startled. Who could have made the noise? It was evident, no one from outside could do it, as the door was closed. Neither could any of the sitters, as the sound came from some distance from the table and all the sitters remained in their original places touching one another's hands. Nor were they in a frame of mind to practise deception. Could it, then, have been caused by some unknown or unseen power? Such were the thoughts that passed through everybody's mind.

The following day, they again sat in a circle at the appointed hour. The proceedings, as on the first day, commenced with the singing of sacred songs. Nothing noteworthy occurred that evening. Their spirits were damped, but they did not give up hope, and were determined to explore the possibilities to the end.

Moti Lal in Trance

They were rather disappointed at the result of two days' practically fruitless sittings. But this did not deter them from sitting the third evening. Deeply concentrated in mind they sat; they sang hymns on this occasion also with great fervour. No sooner had the second song been finished than Moti Lal began to shew symptoms of hysteria. He breathed heavily and his hands began to tremble. Gradually they shook violently and his emotions rose to such a pitch that he began to weep and then sobbed.

Sisir Kumar, whose knowledge was till then confined to books, was of opinion that Moti Lal's body was possessed by some spirit. And he queried "Who art thou"?

Moti Lal made a feeble attempt at reply, but nothing came out of his lips, and he became even more restless. Neither had they any knowledge of, nor familiarity with, any such happenings before. So they got nervous over the condition of Moti Lal and tried to

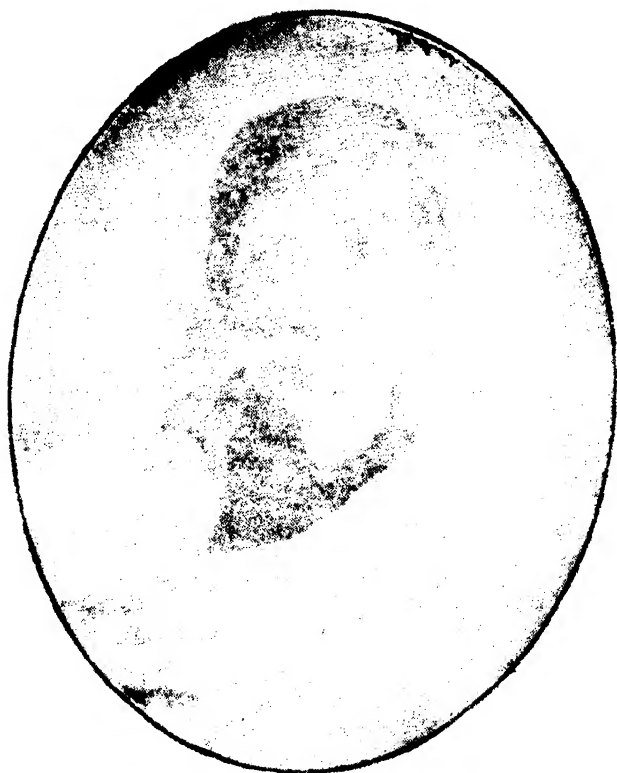
bring him back to his normal state. All the doors and windows were thrown open, water was sprinkled over his face and they went on fanning him till he was brought round. Moti Lal then was asked how he felt while in trance. He replied, "First, there came over me a feeling of stupor, it was followed by a sort of nameless excitement in my mind. Then, gradually I began to lose all control over my body and mind. Some unseen force seemed to throw its arms round my neck and cry plaintively and I too wept. Then the force essayed to speak but could not." As to what the 'force' wanted to say, Moti Lal had no idea.

Manifestation of Hira Lal's Spirit

At the fourth day's seance, the usual preliminaries over, Moti Lal got into trance again and it looked as if he wanted to write something. A pencil was then put between the fingers of his trembling hand and a sheet of paper placed before him. At first he had some difficulty in holding the pencil, but after several efforts he succeeded, and immediately started scribbling vigorously. After several sheets of paper had been spoilt and the pencil blunted, he could write the name of Hira Lal indistinctly. At the sight of Hira Lal's name their sorrow broke loose afresh and they shed tears.

The pencil now slipped off Moti Lal's fingers, and in a state of complete trance he threw his arms round his mother's neck weeping and gasped out, "Mother, I am Hira Lal" and sobbed. Moti Lal's eyes were then closed and he was in a state of semi-consciousness. But the voice in which he uttered those words was unmistakably Hira Lal's and everybody felt it so. The very thought that Hira Lal lived, overwhelmed them with joy. As Moti Lal next began wiping the tears from their eyes, they were practically convinced that Hira Lal really lived and that it was he who was thus consoling them personally. In this thought they found great relief. But doubt crept

in stealthily when the seance was over and they could not feel sure if what they had heard and seen, only a short while ago, was not the result of hallucination. This is what I would call one of God's enigmas. Those who are firmly convinced that they will be united to their departed dear ones after death, are unmoved by



MOTI LAL GHOSH.

Died on 5-9-22 (19th Bhadra, 1329) at the age of 75.

the world's sorrows. None, however, can attain to such a state of perfection or sainthood without a life of prolonged and single-minded devotion and prayer. The remarkable success of the people in America and Europe in the field of spiritualism can only be

attributed to their intense application and perseverance in the cause.

At these seances Moti Lal gradually developed his powers, and the answers came from Hira Lal to the questions put to him through Moti Lal's hand, in writing. The following answers, among others, were recorded: "I am with my father in a wonderful world which is thousand times better than the earth. I have not yet met here the Lord or anybody who has personally met Him. There live even in the spiritual or ethereal world, such evil spirits that behave like animals and who do not even believe in the existence of God."

CHAPTER III.

HEMANTA KUMAR—AN AUTOMATIC WRITER

They continued sitting in these home "circles" every evening and my father Hemanta Kumar, too, soon developed into a medium. Whenever Moti Lal's body was possessed by a spirit, he used to tremble violently, became very restless and felt intense pain. Sometimes he became totally unconscious and it was then really difficult to bring him back to his senses. The case of my father, however, was different. When he went into a trance there was not the least outward change save that his right hand trembled gently. If a pencil was put into his hand, it would move very swiftly and as a result sheets of automatic writing would be as quickly produced.

One remarkable peculiarity was that Hemanta Kumar wrote continuously and steadily in a trance condition but there was nothing to indicate that he was writing under the influence of any super-normal force or entity. It was, indeed, inconceivable that a man of his culture and religious bent of mind, stricken

sorely with grief, would stoop to deception of any kind. And yet his manner was so natural that it was difficult for anyone to believe that he was writing under the influence of a discarnate spirit. The conditions prevailing in after-life, as depicted in his automatic writings, have been found to be strangely similar to those described by the renowned William Stead in his writings purported to have been dictated by the spirit of Miss Julia several years afterwards. This fact leaves little room for doubt as to the origin of those writings.

Hemanta Kumar's mediumistic power grew apace and wonderfully. It became apparent that spirits of higher spheres descended on him while in trance, and many secrets of after-life were disclosed through their communications.

I reproduce the following facts culled from the automatic writings of Hemanta Kumar and published by Mahatma Sisir Kumar in the H. S. Magazine :

“Some spirit has written that it is not a figment of the brain to say, ‘As you sow, so you reap’ or that you have to expiate for every sin committed in this world. As in this material world bodily diseases cause pain to the body, so for every sin committed here, mental anguish and pain are caused to the ethereal body after death. At times, their sufferings are so acute that one shudders to think of them. Those who shed their mortal bodies after leading immoral and evil lives, or after committing murder or any other serious crimes, become evil spirits after death. They not only suffer terribly, but actually fear that there is no end to their sufferings, even hope refusing to come to them. They roam alone uncared for and unsympathised. They cannot pray to God, nay, some of them do not believe in His existence, and some believe firmly that they have become ghosts and can never improve and are bound to the earth for ever. It has also been told that the higher spirits have a difficulty in communicating with such spirits in the lower state, and that those who

shew that they are suffering, are spirits who have made little or no progress in the other world.

“We are told that the condition of the earth-bound spirits is more terrible. They do not know their condition and never repent their sins, but lead a tedious life of ennui and listlessness, every minute being the same to them. Sometimes they possess the bodies of innocent souls and cause all sorts of atrocious acts and give them and others intense pain and anxiety. It is under this plight they live, sometimes thousands of years, till some lucky circumstances lead them to the path of progress.

“Still more terrible is the condition of those who, instead of repenting for what they had done, glory in their sins and throw all the blame of their deeds upon God; some blaspheme horribly; and these spirits get lower and lower gradually and finally they become actually extinct and cease to exist.”

Those who have any belief in a future existence are disposed to think that men, after death, become something like gods; others believe that they become ‘*prets*’ or unclean spirits and remain so at least for some time. But as a matter of fact, people after death find themselves just what they were on earth. One occurrence testified to by Rai Dina Bandhu Mitter Bahadur, the dramatist and perhaps the ‘maker of post offices’ in Bengal, convinced him that there was not only a future world but men who went there did not undergo any sudden change. A Brahmin in his native village married again after the death of his first wife. His first wife died leaving only a daughter, who had become a widow. The custom in this country was to marry girls of very tender age. So the Brahmin, though old in years, had to marry a girl of about 11 or 12. When the girl-wife had grown up to 14 or 15, she was brought to her husband’s home. The widowed daughter of the Brahmin was, one afternoon, dressing the hair of her step-mother, who was younger than herself. Suddenly she stood up, and with the cry of

'Sateen Khabo' fastened her teeth on the cheek of her step-mother. 'Sateen' means co-wife, and 'Khabo' means 'devour'; 'Sateen Khabo' means '(I will) devour my co-wife.'

The fact is that while the widowed daughter of the Brahmin was dressing the hair of her step-mother, the spirit of the departed mother took possession of the body of her daughter and, in a fit of jealousy, severely attacked her husband's new partner in life, biting her on the cheek with the above exclamation. It was only to be expected that the woman, thus attacked, should shriek in agony. As her husband came to her rescue, his 'dead wife' began to abuse him roundly and called him a monster for marrying again in his old age! The Rai Bahadur was very much impressed by this incident. He could not help believing that the daughter had been possessed by the spirit of her dead mother.

It will not be amiss to quote here the following answers given to questions, put to a higher spirit in one of the sittings :

Q.—But why don't the higher spirits take pity upon the earth-bound souls and try to raise them?

A.—Yes, they do so, but they do not always succeed; do not good men also try here on this earth and fail? In the same manner, the higher spirits do their best and sometimes fail, though sometimes they succeed. As a matter of fact, to an earth-bound spirit a man in flesh is a greater reality than a higher spirit in an ethereal form. The fact is, one of the noble functions of spirits in the other world is to minister to the needs of the fallen.

Q.—Have the spirits any other duty?

A.—Yes, they have more work there than you who are here below, though they have not to worry themselves about their means of livelihood. To explain—if they lose their material body, they get another in its stead which has its needs, just as the material

body has. As regards the question, whether a man after death has any work to do in the spirit-world, since he has not to sustain his body there, one consideration will settle the point. Man has a body in the spirit-world, only it is not a material but a



HEMANTA KUMAR GHOSH.

Died on 21-3-92 (9th Chaitra, 1298) at the age of 54.

spiritual one. Man has his material as well as spiritual needs. He, who loses his material body, loses with it all his material needs. But as he gets, in its stead, a spiritual body, his spiritual needs remain, and they are ample to keep him constantly occupied.

The Spirit then elucidated the point further as follows :

“Fancy you are dead, that is to say you have lost your body ; and then examine yourself to see if you have any work left to do. You will see that in losing your body, you do not lose all motive for work. As a matter of fact, in order to know the sort of work a man has to do in the spiritual world, he has only to fancy that he has lost his body ; and then it will be made plain to him that, though in losing his body he gets rid of the need to sustain it, innumerable other wants are left to be met. Though he has lost his body, he has to learn to love, to help in the spirit-world,—and all these occupations are infinitely more pleasant than making money, or eating and drinking. Thus, it is evident that the man, who, in this world, sustains his body to the neglect of his spiritual needs, is born an exceedingly sickly child in the other world.”

Let us now discuss this important question thoroughly. What are the material and the spiritual needs of a man? A man has to sustain his body by partaking of wholesome food and avoiding what is harmful or injurious to it. But man has some other constituents too besides his body, namely, he has his intellect and his emotions. God is so benevolent that man, in satisfying his material needs, derives pleasure from the process. Man naturally wants to know the secrets of nature, which knowledge affords him pleasure and so does search after knowledge ; he wants to love and this process also secures him happiness. It is, therefore, a foolish question to ask what work a man may have to perform in the other world, where he has not got to sustain his body. Are not the secrets of nature so many and so varied that even the immortal soul of man may not know them all? In the same manner, man has endless opportunities of extending the sphere and scope of love and philanthropy in the other world.

There are, indeed, innumerable worlds; and each world has its innumerable secrets. How many secrets of nature does a man of the highest culture in this world know? Very few; and even then none thoroughly. In the spirit-world man will find even the powers of his immortal soul scarcely adequate to know all the secrets which fill the universe.

Besides, one has very little opportunity of knowing the secrets of nature in this world. He can do this only by experiments, which means that for discovering secrets he must depend almost entirely upon chance. But in the spirit-world he has infinitely greater facilities for knowing the secrets of nature than here. If every animal has a soul, so has every material object. If man has his soul, so has iron and so has gold. It is the soul of iron which has made it iron and it is the soul of gold which has made it gold. But a man in the flesh does not see the soul of iron or of gold as one in the spirit-world does. In short, if the material world is open to a man in flesh, the spiritual world, that is to say, the soul of material objects, is open only to the spiritual man; and thus in the spirit-world it becomes easier for man to know the secrets of nature than here.

To repeat, man has his material and his spiritual senses. His spiritual senses come into play only when he has lost his material body. The Hindus, by the wonderful process called *yoga*, were able to disclose it to the outside world. That is to say, by the process of *yoga*, they succeeded in freeing their souls from their bodies, leaving them lifeless, and coming *en rapport* with the spiritual world or souls of things. Mahadeva, the prince of *yogees*, has, it is said, three eyes, the third one in the forehead being the spiritual eye. With this eye the *yogees* succeeded in discovering many secrets of nature; as for instance, the origin of disease, the properties of drugs etc., etc., just as Andrew Jackson Davis did in America, when in a state of clairvoyance. For instance, the Hindus

discovered that the fat of a jackal is a good remedy for insanity. This could never have been done by mere experiments depending upon chance. It is the spiritual sight which enabled them to do it.

One circumstance surprised us greatly, namely, that spirits betrayed greater emotional activity in the other world than they would have done here. Love for one's offspring is a feeling which is implanted in the human breast. Pity for one in distress is another such feeling, which is a gift of God to every man. In the same manner 'Bhakti' (loyalty) to God is a feeling which is universal. Some may have such emotional feeling in a greater and some in a lesser degree; but every one has it. But the 'Bhakti' displayed by spirits is, generally speaking, more fervent than is seen in this world.

One good spirit wrote through my father :

"Beware, brother, how you spend your life here. You will have to give an account of every act of yours in the other world. Nothing against you or in your favour will be forgotten. If you lead a wicked life here, you will be born in the other world in a place called hell, because it is a place of suffering. If you lead merely an animal though innocent life, you will yet be born a sickly child. If you lead a blameless life, you will certainly get a very high place, though yet devoid of the ecstasy that proceeds from the cultivation of the higher emotions. But if you cultivate piety and give up your soul to God, you will be attracted towards the Holiest of the Holy, and obtain the highest place. All the higher spirits have shewn themselves to be eminently pious".

In reply to a question regarding the theory of re-birth the following answer was given :

"There are spirits, who are born in the other world half-formed, and have to be born again in this world to be a whole man. And it was due to this fact that the doctrine of re-birth was preached by some spirits

and accepted by some men below. Those men come to earth again after death, who led an absolutely animal life and have nothing in the spirit-world to attract them. They hanker after meat and drink and other animal gratifications, which are the only things that make their lives worth living, and not finding these in the other world, they struggle to come down to get what they want and sometimes actually succeed. Others come down who were half-formed or embryonic in the other world, as they have to go through another existence in order to be a complete man. Then there are others again, who come down voluntarily to accomplish a great object. These are the prophets and seers, the great discoverers and great men who leave an indelible mark behind them. In short, those who are born here again come down or are sent down by their friends, for their own benefit."

Another higher spirit wrote through my father :

"A spark of life enters the body of a child when he is born in this world. His surroundings and experiences individualize him, and he becomes a man distinct from others. When in this mundane world he has developed to his full manhood, he is taken to another and a better world, where he lives sometimes for thousands and thousands of years, perhaps to die again and be born in a still better world, without, however, losing his identity."

Then the following questions were asked of the spirit :

"But what becomes of babies when they die unindividualized? If they die without any experience of this world, what fate does then await them in the other world? Do they come down again, or have they any other destiny? If they die unindividualized, what chance have they of leading an independent existence?"

The following answer was given :

"It is quite possible that some of these babies have

to come to this world to be rebuilt when they have no specially dear ones in the other world to keep them. But generally, they are taught the experiences of this world by other means. They are made to occupy the bodies of men with whom they have affinity and by this process they acquire the experience necessary to individualize themselves. Thus, if one finds himself suddenly carried to the other world, he may take the body of his brother, sister etc., to acquire the necessary experience.

"It has often been said that some spirits have none to take care of them in the other world. But usually spirits have their dear ones—brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, grand-fathers and so on. When they die, it is these spirits who receive and tend them and provide for their habitation, so long as they need any.

"Infants or very young children, who are taken away from their mothers, are taken care of by spirits who assume the forms of their mothers and who do not allow them to know for a long time that they are dead."(1)

We have it written in the sacred books that one good and holy man in a family procures the salvation of many generations of it. The meaning of this is plain. A good man in the other world takes charge of his wicked son. If he has a wicked father he succeeds in turning his course towards progress.

Lower spirits seldom dared to influence the mediums of our home-circle; the tone of the members of our spiritual circle was so high and spiritual that lower spirits did not feel it congenial to come in contact with them.

No doubt the members of our spiritual circle saw

(1) The informations mentioned above were furnished by good spirits, placed very high, through my father Hemanta Kumar or his sister, Sthira Soudaminee, who was also a good trance medium and acquired clairvoyant powers of high order. I shall narrate some of her wonderful and thrilling manifestations later on.

several wonderful manifestations, but those did not so much convince them of the fact of spirit communication as the philosophical teachings, written through my father. They became certain that they were holding conversation with the dead men of this earth.

When this knowledge dawned upon them, they felt a degree of happiness hitherto unknown. A new world had been revealed to them. They looked at one another in wonder and amazement,—they felt altogether happy.

They requested the spirits to show them some physical manifestations—some wonders; and their reply always was that such wonders would help them very little; they might do so in the beginning, but they would never enforce realisation. Yet they never ceased to insist on it, whenever they got an opportunity. The spirits at last agreed, though very reluctantly, to make an attempt to show them some physical manifestations. The higher spirits declared that they had grown ethereal, and that it was not so convenient for them, as it was for the lower spirits, to show physical manifestations. But they promised to try. "Do one thing," they wrote through my father, "sit at night, (because they were then sitting in the morning as instructed), round a small table, and obscure the light of the room." So, the brothers and sisters sat as directed. After a few minutes they were alarmed to find that Moti Lal had fallen into a rather violent trance; the table began to shake; besides, they heard a rumbling sound as of distant thunder. The manifestations frightened the ladies and they had to stop.

When the communication first came through my father, they wrote to their very dear friends, Babus Kishori Lal Sarkar and Ananda Mohon Bose, about the results obtained. The friends without loss of time communicated the intelligence to the newspaper, 'The Indian Daily News'. Their letter created a very great sensation in the country. For after its publication not

only did they get letters of inquiry from many quarters, but the press took up the matter, and many began to experiment on the subject. Hundreds of 'circles' were formed in the course of a few days.

Thus, spiritual circles were organised in the town of Krishnagar by some of our friends there. They found to their surprise, however, that the alleged spirits, who communicated with them, were incomparably lower in order than those of ours. They wanted to know the cause, and asked my father and uncles to inquire, and send them higher spirits if they condescended to communicate with them. What they did was to read out the question, that the Krishnagar friends had sent them, to a higher spirit. The question ran to this effect: "How is it that the communications made to the members of the Amrita Bazar circle (meaning ours) are high in tone, while those made to them so shallow and worthless?" The spirit wrote in reply:

"The mango tree and the tamarind tree both draw sustenance from the same earth, yet the first produces fruits that are sweet, while the last fruits that are sour."

Being asked to be more explicit, the spirit intimated to them through the medium that they of Krishnagore were a lot of young men who sat for fun, and thus they attracted spirits of lower order. If they wanted communication from the higher spirits they must be more earnest, serious and, if possible, prayerful.

As a matter of fact, whenever higher spirits came to our home-circle, a feeling of purity pervaded there.

One day some writing in Urdu came out of Hemanta Kumar's hand; but none in our family could either decipher it or understand its meaning. It was ultimately sent to one Mir Habibur Sobhan, a Mahomedan gentleman living in the adjoining village named Misrideyara, who read it and explained its meaning.

Mahatma Sisir Kumar in his dedication of the first part of his Bengali book 'Sri Amiya Nimai Charit' writes :

"My brother, Hemanta Kumar, sometimes used to write letters to me while in a state of trance. From their very style and sentiments it was apparent to any one that they were inspired, and I used to lay great store by every command or wish contained in such letters. One such letter reached me when I was living with my family in Hanshkhali, a village in district Nadia, in a house situated on the bank of the river Churni. It was at 6 o'clock in the evening, when I was sitting alone in a room. Its purport was that some superior spirit had whispered into his inner mind to say that I was the marked servant of Lord Gouranga and that the Lord would have many things done through my agency. I now feel that that letter acted as a great incentive to my writing this book."

I have already said that one of the sisters of my father, Sthira Shoudaminee, developed into a good medium. Gradually his other sisters Nila Kadambinee and Lilabatee, and many other members of the family, both male and female, became mediums. Some grew into clairvoyants, some into clairsaudients, some experts at hypnotism, and some again into healing mediums.

Though bad spirits did not ordinarily come to our seances, yet sometimes they did. When an evil spirit made its appearance, there was no mistaking it from the way the poor medium behaved. He would shout, indulge in coarse abuse, violently fling out his arms and kick, suffering great pain all the time. On rare occasions, hearing God's name repeatedly uttered, it would abandon the medium and disappear. But often the medium had to be taken out into the open air and water sprinkled on his eyes and face before he could be restored to his usual condition.

But it was different with spirits of higher order.

On their appearance, not only would the medium not suffer any pain, but the whole company became conscious of an extremely pleasurable feeling. Sometimes such exquisite music would flow from the medium's throat that, every sitter would remain spell-bound with it. Often my eldest aunt Sthira Soudaminee used to be possessed by a very high spirit called "Haridas," who simply delighted the audience by singing delicious Kirtan songs. Sitting after our fresh bereavement, Haridas's song acted as a soothing anodyne driving all our sorrows for the nonce.

Sometimes it so happened that on the possession of a medium's body by a particular spirit the medium spoke exactly in the voice and enunciation of the dead person. Even his very accent and tricks of speech were clearly perceptible. On some occasions, again, spirits of unknown persons used to appear, and from the particulars given by them their identities were easily established by later enquiries.

The news of the invocation of discarnate spirits in our home-circles gradually spread among the public. As a result, many bereaved women came and were admitted to sit in our circle. They would often succeed in getting in touch with their departed relatives, and even talk to them through the medium; and the knowledge of the survival of life thus gained acted as a balm to their aching heart.

A strange incident happened one day. A woman, who had come to get news of her dead relative, was standing aside in a corner of the room and watching the seance from a distance. All on a sudden, she felt a heaviness creep over her limbs and she shook violently, so much so, that she was unable to get out of the room, however much she wished and try hard as she could. It was then observed that the spirit of her dead relative had taken possession of her body, and under its influence she wept and muttered some words. As, however, it was evident that she

was suffering from great agony, she was taken outside the room and she came round after long and careful tending.

CHAPTER IV.

OTHER BEREAVEMENTS

My Mother

Eight months after the passing away of uncle Hira Lal, my mother left us for her heavenly home. She was only 19 years old then and myself five years and a half. My mother's first born child, I saw the light of day in our home at Palua-Magura (now Amrita Bazar). I was about five years old when she conceived again and shortly before her approaching confinement, she was removed to her father's house where she fell ill. Before she could fully come round she gave premature birth to a still-born child, when it had been but eight months in the womb. This shock was too much for her and she could not survive it. When the dead body was removed to the burning ghaut, I accompanied it to set fire to the funeral pyre. Her face was calm and peaceful, and there was no sign in it of the proverbial shadow of death. She looked as if she was enjoying a placid and peaceful slumber. The expression of her face at that time lies deeply imprinted on my memory.

After my mother's death my father came and took me and my grand-mother (mother's mother) away to our native village, Amrita Bazar. At that time, home-circles used to be formed regularly in our house and my grand-mother also joined them. One day my mother's spirit was drawn to the seance and took

possession of the entranced body of my aunt, Sthira Soudaminee. I was then playing outside with other children but was called into the room where the seance was being held. No sooner had I entered the room than I was embraced by my aunt and taken into her lap. I was startled by the voice in which she spoke to me—it was no other than my departed mother's—the same old affectionate voice. I was deeply affected and was about to give vent to my feelings and ask her to stay and not leave us again, but I was so overpowered by them that no words came out of my lips. I hid my face in my aunt's clothes and wept. My aunt then took me in her arms in the very manner mother used to and said, "Don't cry darling, I have come," and as she said so, a few drops of her tears fell on my body. My emotion grew so strong that I became quite restless, and my grandmother carried me outside and tried to soothe me.

A particular song, invoking the Universal Mother, used to be frequently sung in our home-circle. Whenever I heard that song, my heart yearned for my mother, and, as if to reciprocate the feeling, my mother's spirit also used to be invariably drawn to the seance and, after taking possession of the medium's body, would fondle and caress me. In the end we would both relieve the tension of our feeling by weeping. A few years after this, I was one day mesmerised by uncle Ram Lal, when I saw the face of my mother distinctly, over-flowing with affection. Whenever I think of it my heart swells with emotion.

Basanta Kumar's Last Journey (Death)

A year after my mother's death, my eldest uncle, Basanta Kumar, too, left for his eternal home. He was then but 32 years old. From early boyhood, he suffered from pulmonary disorders, which developed into consumption. Even in his broken health, he tried his best to build up an ideal home with all the members of our family. How far he succeeded is

amply indicated in the following note left by my eldest aunt, Sthira Soudaminee, in a note book, named "Amader Paribarik Prasanga" (Our Family Reminiscences): "If anybody in our family has attained any moral excellence and developed the religious bent of his mind, it is wholly due to my eldest brother Basanta Kumar."

Mahatma Sisir Kumar dedicated the second part of his book 'Sri Amiya Nimai Charit' to his brother Basanta Kumar. In it he said: "I used to regard my eldest brother like God, and I could have sacrificed my life hundred times over to please him. He moulded our character as a potter does his models with clay. He simply burned with religious fervour. One day, he was singing a hymn of his own composition in a secluded spot and tears were rolling down his cheeks. Suddenly I came upon him and, finding him in that condition, asked, "Brother, why are you weeping?" A little taken aback, he hastily wiped his tears and told me quietly that I would know all about it when I had grown older.

"My brother's health could not stand the strain of the mental worry and physical exertion entailed in the work he had undertaken, and it broke down in a short time. While he was in this state of health, one day we were engaged in conversation, when he coughed out blood. He tried to screen it from sight, so as not to alarm me. I was so engrossed that I did not notice it at first, but I came to know about it at last and I broke into tears. My brother then tried to pacify me saying that I should not grieve for him, for it was fit and proper that one who had come to the world first should quit it first too. He had been feeling insufferable bodily pain on account of the wasting disease and begged my leave to let him go in peace."

After this, Basanta Kumar was confined to bed. At last one day as he lay resting his head on the lap of his younger brother, Sisir, he said in a faint voice,

“Brother Sisir, I am off. Do not uselessly betray your weakness by crying, thereby increasing my agony,”—and while in that state, without showing any outward sign of death, his soul left his mortal body. His death was mourned by the whole Ghosh family.

Towards the end of the dedication Sisir Kumar wrote thus: “I was parted from my brother (Basanta Kumar) very many years ago, but the pangs of separation are still in me as keen as ever. Even now, when I sit down to worship God, I see my eldest brother’s image in his place.”

A nobler instance of fraternal devotion is rarely to be met with.

Death of My Two Aunts

Our misfortunes did not end here. About ten months after this melancholy event, there was a terrible outbreak of cholera in our village which swept away a large number of its inhabitants. Thinking it unsafe to remain in the village, almost all the members of our family were sent to the headquarters station of the district at Jessore. My aunt (Basanta Kumar’s wife) could not, however, be removed as she was practically on her death-bed suffering from pneumonia. My third aunt (Sisir Kumar’s wife) could not also be removed as her ten-month old baby was lying seriously ill. Afterwards she was taken to the doctor’s quarters of our hospital on the bank of the Kapotakshi with her sick son, for safety; but Basanta Kumar’s wife had to be detained in our residence. Both my paternal and maternal grandmothers had also to stay back for attending to her during her illness.

I give here a quotation from ‘Our Family Reminiscences’. My aunt Sthira Soudaminee describes the incident as follows :

“Greater misfortune came upon us. Immediately after reaching the doctor’s quarters in the local

hospital, Sisir Babu's wife contracted cholera. At home Basanta Babu's wife was lying in a precarious condition. Sisir Babu's son, seriously ill as he was, was taken back to our house. We, three sisters, were then putting up with our respective fathers-in-law. Only the mother-in-law of Hemanta Babu was then helping my mother at our Amrita Bazar house.

"The very day Sisir Babu's wife got cholera, my mother, with Sisir Babu's son in her arms, was proceeding alone just before evening, to see her daughter-in-law (Sisir Babu's wife) Bhuban Mohinee. What an irony of fate! Sisir Babu too, just after the death of his dear wife, was proceeding homewards. Midway he met his mother, with eyes streaming with tears, proceeding along the road with the half-dead child in her arms. Sisir Babu clasped her, to his bosom and sobbingly burst out, "What are you going to see, mother, now? That saintly lady is no more in this world." Then he led the mother back home, where, on their arrival, they saw that Basanta Babu's wife had just breathed her last."

Suffering from the miseries of widowhood for ten months, my first aunt (Basanta Kumar's wife) passed away when she was only twenty-one years of age. She left behind her a five-year old son, Saroj Kanti, and a two-year old daughter, Sarala. After a year Sarala also followed her mother to her eternal home.

The pitiable plight of my grand-mother can better be imagined than described. Within a few years she lost her husband, two sons, three daughters-in-law and some grand-children in quick succession. Add to that the burden of bringing up a few orphan children with only my maternal grand-mother to help her, all her three daughters living, at the time, in their husbands' houses.

CHAPTER V

SISIR KUMAR AND HIS TWO WIVES

His First Wife—Bhuban Mohinee

Sisir Kumar's first wife, Bhuban Mohinee, left this world at the age of 17, when she had barely reached her adolescence. She was married when she was a child of nine and, therefore, had but 8 years of marital life. But she was so beautiful and charming and so devoted to her husband in accordance with the Hindu ideals that she captured the imagination of the idealist Sisir Kumar to an unbelievable extent. He bewailed her loss in an extremely touching poem composed by him in Bengali so late as forty years after her death, and he nursed his grief right up to the end of his life, in spite of being wedded to a second wife, a few years after, at the persistent request of his mother.

Notwithstanding the best of attention, care and nursing, Bhuban Mohinee's ten-month old child did not survive her for more than six-months. This added to Sisir Kumar's cup of grief which was now overflowing.

The following scraps of conversation between the husband and the girl-wife will give a fair idea of the deep love and reverence Bhuban Mohinee cherished for Sisir Kumar :

Husband.—Will you tell me what I should do if you prove faithless to me?

Wife.—(Laughing) You should kill me.

Husband.—But if I prove faithless to you, what would you do?

Wife.—Nothing.

Husband.—(Surprised) If instead of loving you, I love some other woman, won't you feel jealous and angry?

Wife.—Not at all. You, men, have no idea of what a husband is to a woman. How much you love me, or if you love me at all, does not matter in the least, nor does it affect my feelings for you. I consider myself fortunate that God has granted me the right to love you. I do not want anything more than this. So long I am not deprived of this right, I shall remain happy and contented.

Husband.—If I marry again what would you do?

Wife.—In your happiness lies mine. If you think you will be happy by marrying again, I shall certainly give my consent with pleasure. I can sacrifice my life a hundred times over for your happiness. I have nothing to ask from you. I shall be contented if I get only a little toe of yours. Or even if I can't get that, I shall be content with the knowledge that you are alive.

Sisir Kumar's sisters often rallied her on her natural simplicity playfully insinuating her husband's want of love for her. "Sister", she would say, "what can I do? I can not find in my heart any anger for him."

Sisir Kumar wrote yet another poem in Bengali describing the intensity of Bhuban Mohinee's love for him and his reciprocation.

Bhuban Mohinee died of cholera at the age of 17, as has already been mentioned in the previous chapter.

His Second Wife—Kumudinee

Five years after the death of his first wife, Bhuban Mohinee, Sisir Kumar was prevailed upon to take a second wife named Kumudinee. The latter's nature was not so soft and yielding as that of the former, but she had a keener intelligence and a greater regard for the well-being of her husband and was thus able to completely win his heart. Often, the couple talked about Bhuban Mohinee. Constant praise of Bhuban Mohinee in the mouth of her husband, instead of causing any jealousy in her mind,

would evoke a spontaneous feeling of regard. On many occasions, conversation on the following line would take place :



KUMUDINEE

Died on 29-8-06 (13th Bhadra, 1313) at the age of 46.

Husband.—Your elder sister (meaning Bhuban Mohinee) had many qualities which are rare in these days.

Wife.—(In a voice swelling with emotion) Yes, I have heard of them. I like to hear about her very much. Whenever I hear of her love for you, I feel inclined to bow my head at her feet and deplore my inability to love you so deeply.

Husband.—But she was your co-wife; would you not feel jealous for that?

Wife.—(Shocked) What! jealous of her—a goddess! It would be more natural for her to be jealous of me, as I am enjoying you—her property. On the other hand, I am ever grateful to her for granting me the right to enjoy her property. It is impossible for me to repay her my debts. My devotion and regard for her know no bounds. I spend more time daily in offering prayers to her than to God, and the substance of my prayer invariably is, “O Goddess! may I be vouchsafed with a particle of your self-less love for your husband!”

Sight of Astral Body in Death-Bed

In course of time Kumudinee became the mother of eight children,—six sons and two daughters. Two of her sons died in her life-time. During her last illness, shortly before her death, pointing to a vacant corner, she shouted in an agitated voice: “Who is that beautiful married woman? Oh, what a soft and tender look! But I never saw her before.” She then lost her voice and bade adieu to this world. All those who were present at the death-bed were of opinion that the phantom seen was no other than the spirit-form of Sisir Kumar’s first wife, Bhuban Mohinee. Many people see the apparitions of their dead relatives like this just before death.

For many years Sisir Kumar could not make any time or opportunity to sit in circles. But after his second wife’s death he started sitting again in our home-circle regularly. Unfortunately for him there was no medium of outstanding ability at the time, and his desire for free conversation with his departed wife was not fulfilled. Thereupon, he made up his mind to pick out a suitable and reliable person and give him or her the necessary training in mediumship so that he could sit with that person in private exclusive circles. He

was well-versed in the subject of spiritualism and so it was not very difficult for him to choose such a person.

Trance State of Suhash Nayana

He perceived in his youngest daughter, Suhash Nayana, qualities of a good medium and accordingly included her among the regular sitters in the home-circle. After a few days' sitting there was manifestation of spirit descent on her. At first she breathed slowly and then heavily; then she started tapping the table with both hands. As it appeared that she wanted to write something, a pencil was put into her fingers. She started scribbling and then wrote: "When I was living here alone, I had a comparatively peaceful time. True, I have got a companion now, but I cannot feel at ease as you are living there alone. But this state of things will not continue long. You will soon come over here and join us when we all three shall spend our days happily in singing hymns in praise of God. As you are now feeling Kumudinee's absence more acutely, she comes to you frequently and I keep back. Being pressed by her to-day I have accompanied her here."

After writing so far the pencil dropped from the hand of Suhash. As she was evidently suffering from great pain she was restored to her normal condition after some difficulty. She was almost speechless with astonishment when she read the writing, and said: "Who has written this? It looks like my writing, but I don't remember having written it. I see it contains my mother's name. True, I was thinking of my mother all the time I sat in the circle, but why should she write her own name herself? It is, of course, possible for my step-mother to have written these lines, but I never thought of her even once."

As Suhash had never seen her step-mother, she having died long before her birth, Suhash would hardly think of her in preference to her own mother. It was

also apparent from her talks that she was completely unconscious at the time and so the writing was automatic, *i.e.*, it was done under the influence of some discarnate spirit. It is well-known that the mediums who lose their consciousness completely are the best and most reliable, for the writings of those who retain a part of their consciousness are likely to be tinged with their own sub-conscious selves.

On the following day Suhash was possessed by another spirit. It would not give out its name at first, but pressed by Sisir Kumar, it said in a grave voice, "I am your father. You will have to come here soon, so be ready."

Sisir.—Father, I neglected you very much during your life-time. I have always thought of clasping you in my arms on going over there and begging your forgiveness.

Father.—Instead of begging my forgiveness, pray to God. Don't you remember how your mother was engaged in austere devotions for ten long years? You are fortunate in being able to surrender yourself to Lord Gouranga over there. Pray to God that you may be equally blessed when you come over here. I must be off now as the medium is unable to bear my force.

Sisir.—Are you and my departed brothers living together?

Father.—I and your mother are together. There is, of course, very little difference here between living together and apart. Practically we are all living together. I must go now, I cannot stay any longer.

From the statement of Sisir Kumar's father (Hari Narayan) that the medium was unable to bear his force, it was apparent that he was a spirit of a very high order, and understanding that it was very difficult for a young and comparatively undeveloped vehicle like Suhash to bear his force, he was anxious to leave so soon.

After the departure of Hari Narayan's spirit, that of Sisir Kumar's second wife (Kumudinee) took possession of Suhash's body. The very first question Sisir Kumar asked her was, "When shall I die?"

A.—I can not tell you that : God does not allow us to have such knowledge. The meaning of 'soon', which father-in-law said, may be 2 years or even 4 years. When he appeared in the seance we were all present.

Q.—Let that go : Let us have some fun now. Well, tell me which of you is the better of the two,—you or your 'didi' ?¹

A.—'Didi' is certainly better.

Q.—You will, of course, say that. Your 'didi' never led a religious life, but you did it long. How can she be better than you?

A.—'Didi' has been here for the last 40 years. Do you think she has remained idle all this while?—no, she has been devoting herself to religion all this time. I had, indeed, taken to spiritual exercises at first, but afterwards my heart turned to stone and I gave them all up. (Here she began to weep.)

Q.—Why do you weep?

A.—Something occurs to my mind which makes me weep. I won't tell you about it as that will pain you.

Q.—As you have told me so much, why not tell all.

A.—The day I left my body and came here, my heart went in a flutter, I felt a burning desire to hold you in my arms and relieve my agony.

Sisir Kumar's face fell, he was really pained to hear it. Kumudinee said, "I have done wrong by telling you this." Sisir Kumar then replied, "Never mind; leave that aside. Now, tell me which of you is more beautiful,—you or your 'didi'? Kumudinee

¹ Didi—Elder sister; here Sisir Kumar's first wife.

laughed out and asked, "Whom do you love more?" and then she added, "Didi had a desire to say a lot of things yesterday, she is sorry she could not. I pressed her so much to come here, but she did not, and forced me to come instead. Chhidam¹ is mad for coming here; he wants to come here every day."

Q.—Why don't you let him?

A.—He cannot come without our help.

Then after a pause she went on, "Didi cannot possess 'Fuli'² as easily as I, because she is my daughter. When I was over there on earth, I used to think that as you were my husband you were my property. On account of this vanity in my mind I never took you at your true worth. For this reason I suffered much during my last days. I then prayed to God: 'Oh God, give me health for six months more and let me serve my husband with my whole soul. But that could not be. (Weeps).

Q.—Again you are crying?

A.—(Restraining herself) No, I won't cry. (Then laughs). Do you know why I am speaking instead of writing?

Q.—Why?

A.—To save your paper—I know you are a stingy man.

Q.—From what Bhuban wrote after appearing here yesterday, I conclude that she is no longer the simple thing she was.

A.—How can she remain a simple thing for ever? Why should intelligence be lacking in one who speaks from the bottom of one's heart? Let me go, we are not permitted to stay long.

Q.—Won't it suit you to stay a little longer?

A.—Not that it does not suit me, but God, in

¹ Chhidam—Nickname of Sisir Kumar's second son Amiya Kanti.

² Fuli—Nickname of Suhash Nayana.

His mercy, has given us an opportunity to speak to each other; we shouldn't abuse it.

No sooner had the spirit of Kumudinee left Suhash Nayana than the spirit of a Hindusthani woman possessed her. Then the medium got excited and began to speak fluently in Hindi. Suhash never had the habit of speaking in Hindi in this way. Realising that some wicked soul had appeared, Sisir Kumar tried to bring Suhash back to consciousness, but the more he tried the more the medium resisted and went on calling him names in filthy language. After great difficulty Suhash was restored to her senses.

Next day, just after the sitting of the circle had commenced, the spirit of Kumudinee came and descended upon Suhash. Immediately after, the medium said, "Fuli was much afflicted yesterday; a bad woman had been trying to come for some days past; we had prevented her; yesterday she got an opportunity and suddenly possessed Fuli. We at once tried to drive her away but it took sometime."

Q.—How did you drive her away?

A.—We looked steadily at her. At first she ignored our look, but at last she could not stand it and went away. She was a labouring woman in a tea garden. She had poisoned her husband to death. Her present condition is extremely frightful, it excites fear to see it, and pity too.

Q.—Why don't you give her good instructions?

A.—Yes, we did so for a few days, but she does not listen. Those who are addicted to evil deeds in the physical world can not change their mentality easily even after coming over here. It should be borne in mind, that the progress that is possible there in one year can't be made here even in twenty years.

Q.—Why didn't you let your 'didi' come?

A.—Well, she is near us.

Q.—Just see how I set you two together by the ears.

A.—Oh, that you never can; it is altogether impossible, for you cannot even form an idea of how good she is. Do you know that she has been waiting for you these forty long years?

Q.—Well, women as you are, how could you drive away that spirit?

A.—Here, there's no difference between man and woman. The more virtuous a person is, the greater is his strength. I was so fortunate as to get you for my husband.

Q.—If you hadn't got me, you would have got somebody else, say Kedar Haldar.

A.—(Laughing) No, it is not Kedar but some one else, whose name I can't recollect.

Q.—I think his name was Chandi Haldar.

A.—(Laughing aloud) Yes, you are right.

Q.—Tell me all about the other world.

A.—You go on putting questions and I shall answer.

Q.—How do you spend your days there?

A.—By laughing, crying, gossiping, walking and sleeping.

Q.—Do you really sleep?

A.—No, not quite that; we take a sort of rest.

Q.—Do you meet my brothers?

A.—Yes, often— but I and 'didi' live together.

Q.—Have you been able to bring Fuli under your control?

A.—Yes, completely.

Q.—Will you be able to answer all my questions?

A.—Yes, certainly.

Q.—Even what Fuli doesn't?

A.—Assuredly, yes.

Q.—Tell me something which Fuli does not know.

A.—All right. You can ask me anything about our travelling by boat or staying at Hanshkhali, neither of which Fuli knows anything about.

Q.—Well, how many of us went by that boat? Name them.

A.—You, I, Piyush, Pande, and Rakhal's mother.¹ You see Fuli knows nothing at all about Pande and Rakhal's mother.

One reason for the dearth of good mediums in India is the absence of a systematic and regular study of spiritualism. Besides, a medium must lose complete consciousness in order to be under the absolute control of the possessing spirit, for without such control communications are not free from all tinge of suspicion. Fuli was under the absolute control of her mother and hence all communications obtained through her were authentic and true. It was, therefore, easy for the medium to give information about Pande and Rakhal's mother.

When the second son of Suhash Nayana was born, Rakhal's mother was engaged for the lying-in room. Fifteen days after, the news of her only son's (Rakhal's) illness reached her, but she could not resist the temptation of earning some more money, so she did not give up the job and go to see him. About 26 or 27 days after, about 1 o'clock at night, Suhash felt a choking sensation in her throat when she was profoundly asleep. To her right was lying her 3-year old son, to her left the new-born baby and next to it Rakhal's mother. Suhash was now thoroughly aroused and, looking up, saw a short-sized man standing near her head and staring at her. Thinking that what she saw was an apparition and not a human being, she supplicated Lord Gouranga to ward off any evil which the presence of the apparition might cause. The magic name of the Lord dispelled the feeling of terror in her. She found the apparition advance towards Rakhal's mother and take its stand near her. Suhash got up and called out to her. She appeared to be awake

¹ Piyush—Sisir Kumar's eldest son; Pande—Cook; Rakhal's mother maid servant.

but did not get up from her sleep, so Suhash went to her and gave her a good shaking when she burst out crying. Suhash understood later that Rakhal's mother had been shouting her son's name and crying. On being questioned she replied that Rakhal had come to her and said, "Mother, you did not come to me, so I have come to you. Please look after my sons." Two days later, news came of Rakhal's death on the very night his apparition appeared and at the identical hour.

CHAPTER VI.

CLAIRVOYANCE

Sashi-mukhee

One of our female relatives, named Sashi-mukhee, who used to sit in our home-circles, developed wonderful powers of clairvoyance. Whenever she used to shut her eyes and concentrate her mind she saw spirits before her. She could sometimes talk to them, and that even when not sitting in a seance. Such powers are commonly to be seen among those who are mesmerised but Sashi-mukhee was never mesmerised in her life. She developed these powers spontaneously.

One day while absorbed in meditation in our circle, she suddenly addressed my paternal grandmother : "Auntie, I see somebody here ; he says he is your father." On being asked to describe his features she did so with unmistakable correctness of detail leaving no doubt about the identity. Sashi-mukhee had never seen him in his life-time, nor had he ever come to our house. Still, to make assurance doubly sure, grand-mother put some intimate questions to

Sashi-mukhee, of which no one but her father had any knowledge, and all the questions were answered correctly. My grand-mother was accordingly convinced that the spirit-form that appeared was no other than her father's.

Sashi-mukhee was a very simple and artless soul. She was incapable of concocting any false story or drawing on her imagination. It is strange, however, that she lost her power of clairvoyance entirely along with her husband's death. Try as she might she failed to see her husband or any other dead person clairvoyantly since then.

Niroj Nayana

Many years after, another girl of our family, Niroj Nayana, the second daughter of my youngest uncle, Golap Lal, also developed the power of clairvoyance. We removed to Calcutta in the year 1871, and 40 years after that, she developed her power and still retains it. Like Sashi-mukhee, Niroj Nayana is also of a simple and straightforward nature, and like her too she was never mesmerised but developed the power spontaneously. She has seen the spirit-forms of several dead persons and exchanged thoughts with them. The following incidents among them are worth-mentioning.

I

My younger brother, Parimal Kanti, died at Baidyanath on August 3, 1923, and we returned to Calcutta a few days after his death. Soon after our return, we formed a home-circle and Niroj Nayana was one of the sitters. Before long she could see Parimal Kanti clairvoyantly and the following dialogue ensued between her and the operator in charge of the seance :

Q.—Where and in what condition do you see him ?

A —He is lying on a cot.



PARIMAL KANTI GHOSH
Died on 3-8-23 at the age of 37.

Q.—Is he quite conscious?

A.—No, not yet quite conscious.

Q.—Is there anybody near him?

A.—Yes, his aunt (mother's sister) is there.¹

Q.—Is there any covering on his body?

A.—Yes, he has a coat on.

Q.—Of what stuff is it made?

A.—Chintz.

Q.—Of what colour?

A.—White with violet stripes.

Q.—Is there anything else on the bed?

A.—Yes, a white sheet gathered up near his feet.

All these answers were perfectly correct. Parimal lay on his death-bed exactly in this state. Niroj Nayana had no means of knowing all these details.

On many other occasions too after this she saw Parimal clairvoyantly and gave us details of how he regained consciousness in his new existence after death; how he attended our home-circles for giving consolation to his family members; and how at last, with the effort and assistance of his dear ones left behind, he succeeded in resisting his mundane attractions.

II

This incident is still more wonderful. A young man in the house of one of our relatives in Calcutta died. At the request of his near relatives we formed a home-circle with Niroj Nayana as one of the sitters and invoked his spirit with the necessary formalities. In a short time, Niroj Nayana could see a young man lying unconscious on a bed and a young up-country woman standing near it as if guarding the body. No one else was there. She described the features of the

¹ This aunt predeceased Parimal by a few years. After she became a widow, she came and lived with our family. Parimal was brought up by her and she was very fond of him.

young man minutely, and added that the young girl went away on seeing a discarnate spirit approach.

The details obtained at the seance were duly communicated to the relatives of the dead man. The description tallied exactly with the deceased, but no one could place the up-country young girl. On careful enquiry, however, the following startling facts were elicited later on :

In one of their rented houses an up-country family was living at the time. The deceased had to visit the adjoining house on business every day. A young married girl of that family looked sweet upon him but without any apparent response. Gradually she fell head and ears in love with him and lost all sense of decency. She communicated her desire to him by all possible means but the young man, who was virtuously inclined, repulsed her advances. At this time the girl suddenly died, presumably of broken heart. No one else knew of this secret love except a personal friend of the deceased who, during the investigation, disclosed it to others, thus confirming what Niroj Nayana had seen clairvoyantly. The deceased was a married man with two children when the up-country girl tried to seduce his affection from his wife. Even after her death, the woman's spirit tried to frighten him on several occasions. During the last days of his illness he was known to have been startled by the sight of her apparition. We came to know later on in one of our circles that by the aid of some higher spirits the evil spirit of this woman was persuaded to leave him. It was, of course, impossible for Niroj Nayana to know all these details of the secret love affair and to make a story out of them from her own imagination.

Lilabatee Mesmerised

At our village home one day Sisir Kumar, after mesmerising his youngest sister Lilabatee, asked her (spirit) to go to the local post office at once, which was situated about half a mile away on the bank of the



LILABATEE.

Died at the age of 30.

river Kapotakshi and near the local bazar. The following conversation then took place :

Q.—Have you reached the post office?

A.—Yes, I am here.

Q.—Enter the room by the eastern door.

A.—I have done so.

Q.—Tell me how many tables, chairs and almirahs there are in the room and in what position.

A.—There are 2 tables, 4 chairs and 2 almirahs. One table is on the northern end of the room and another on the southern. The chairs are on the eastern and western sides of each table. Both the almirahs are on the western side of the room.

Besides these she also gave details of articles on the tables, the number of persons in the room and many other particulars.

After restoring Lilabatee to her normal condition Sisir Kumar went to the post office, accompanied by several friends, and found all the details given by her to be perfectly correct. Lilabatee was then a grown up young lady and was, therefore, according to the orthodox Hindu custom, not allowed to go to the post office nor had she any opportunity of seeing what was inside the room.

CHAPTER VII.

STHIRA SHOUDAMINEE

A First Class Trance Medium and Clairvoyant

My eldest aunt (father's sister), Sthira Shoudaminee, was a good medium. Her strong points were automatic writing and trance utterance. Many superior spirits used to possess her body while in trance. Stories of wonderful things were related by her while in that condition. Sometimes well-composed poems and songs used to come out through her automatic writings. Sometimes even she would sing unknown songs in her trance state. Being a good medium, the spirits who used her body expressed their thoughts very distinctly. She gradually developed the power

of clairvoyance too. Sisir Kumar used to mesmerise her regularly from the time we commenced forming home-circles in our native village, and, as a result, not only did she acquire the power of supernatural vision but she could also release her etherial body from its material shell and traverse through the whole universe. Her powerful mental faculties contributed materially to her becoming a first class medium.



STHIRA SOUDAMINEE.

Died on 24-4-25 (11th Baisak, 1332)
at the age of 83.

Mahatma Sisir Kumar himself, though not even an ordinary medium, was an expert at mesmerism and hypnotism. He never failed in his attempts to

mesmerise or hypnotise anybody. Under the influence of his mesmerisation Sthira Shoudaminee's spirit was enabled to roam in every sphere up to the seventh heaven and bring back wonderful descriptions of the places visited. Some extracts from her writings in "Our Family Reminiscences," touching this subject, are reproduced below :

"When I lost all consciousness under the mesmeric influence of brother Sisir Kumar, my spirit, after being released from my earthly body, used to soar upwards. First I went to the lowest sphere where all the "ghosts" or evil spirits are huddled together. Their appearance is too dreadful to describe. Those who have led most degraded lives on this earth find their way there after death and continue to live in their accustomed fashion quarrelling amongst themselves like dogs and jackals.

"Uneducated but innocent people go straight to the second sphere after death.

"Those who have faith in gods and goddesses and those who do not hurt, injure, or are not envious of others go to the third sphere and employ themselves in worshipping their own gods.

"The appearance of the spirits who inhabit the fourth sphere is very beautiful and their bodies are slightly luminous.

"Above the fourth are three other spheres where spirits move on to from the fourth according to their progress and advancement. Their aura also becomes brighter and brighter commensurate with their advancement.

"The seventh sphere is so beautiful, charming and pleasant that it is impossible to conceive it. A soft and cool effulgence of variegated colour is ever radiating from all things here; the atmosphere is laden with the sweetest fragrances; all the modes and tunes of music embodied in visible shapes move about—it is a place of perpetual bliss. Here all beings float on a

sea of love and drink deep draughts thereof. This is the Brindaban (or Heaven) of the Vaishnabas (a sect of Hindus). Once you come here you will never want to go elsewhere."

Sthira Shoudaminee in the Seventh Sphere

I shall now relate how Sthira Shoudaminee ascended the seventh sphere. One day Sisir Kumar was anxious to experiment as to what happens on prolonged or deep mesmerisation, and with this object in view he put his sister, Sthira Shoudaminee, to mesmeric sleep and continued the process for a long time even after she had lost all consciousness. He then called out to her again and again and asked her if she was asleep but got no response. Her body became cold, and heart and pulse ceased to beat. In spite of these distressing symptoms Sisir Kumar was not in despair. He made frantic efforts to revive her by applying all the known processes and shouted out to her again if she was sleeping. At long last she replied that she was not sleeping but dead. Sisir Kumar looked aghast and queried: "What did you say—dead!"

Ans.—Yes, I am dead, and I have come to the place where spirits go after death.

Thoroughly alarmed Sisir Kumar begged hard of his sister to come back.

"Why are you pressing me to go back?" She answered. "Death is nothing but a pleasant change. Once a spirit comes here it doesn't want to go back to the earth."

Greatly hurt by this reply he said: "All that you say may be true, but don't you realise my position? If you leave us in this manner my heart will be altogether broken. Besides, you can well imagine what will be the condition of our old mother."

"The place where I have come," said the sister "is thousand times more beautiful than the material world,—it is enchanting and peaceful. Everything here is full of joy abounding. No one can come here of his own free will. It is by your efforts that I have been able to come here, and you are now asking me to go back! You, who have so much affection for me, should rejoice in my happiness, but you are anxious to drag me down to your sorrowful world instead, why?"

On hearing this reply Sisir Kumar burst into tears and pleading in a sorrowful voice faint with emotion beseeched her: "Daminee, don't you realise that if you fail to return I shall be hanged on the gallows? Moreover, is it not highly selfish on your part to give pain to so many of us for your own happiness?"

After prolonged arguments like these, Sthira Shoudaminee's spirit agreed to come back, and life returned to her body slowly. It is curious, however, that soon after she regained consciousness she asked Sisir Kumar not to mesmerise her again, for she was afraid her spirit might not agree to come back next time. It is one of the paradoxes of life that when you are alive you don't like to die; while, when you are dead you do not want to come back.¹

Separation of Astral or Etherial Body

I am narrating yet another extraordinary incident. It happened in 1869, *i.e.*, two years before we removed to Calcutta. On the eastern side of our house lived a family who were distantly related to us; among whom was a lad of 15 or 16 years, named Sasadhar, who had been suffering from a chronic disease. He

¹ This incident has been incorporated in the "Life of Mahatma Sisir Kumar" written by S. Anath Nath Basu, and Sisir Kumar himself has also referred to it in his "Hindu Spiritual Magazine" (Vol. IV, No. I, pp. 158).



Separation of astral body at the time of death.

occasionally had fainting fits. One afternoon he walked to our place with great difficulty and fainted away. All efforts to revive him failed and the doctor declared his case hopeless. A novel idea then occurred to Sisir Kumar who, in order to test if the astral or etherial body gets separated from the material body at the time of one's death and if so how, started mesmerising Sthira Shoudaminee with a view to exercising her powers of clairvoyance for the purpose. When she was totally unconscious he addressed her spirit in a peremptory tone and asked it to go to Sasadhar at once and describe all that it saw there. She replied thus in her entranced state: "Yes, I have come to Sasadhar. I see the spirit-forms of his dead relatives here. They are all eagerly looking at him as if expecting something." She continued after a short pause: "I see a sort of vapour oozing out of his body; the vapour-like substance is assuming the shape of a human body;—now it is the exact counterpart of Sasadhar." She concluded: "Sasadhar's relatives have taken away his astral body with them."

Clairvoyance of Sthira Shoudaminee

Three days before the death of Binodi Lal, aunt Sthira Shoudaminee had a wonderful premonitory vision while she was betwixt asleep and awake. I give the following translation from the writings of Sthira Shoudaminee:

"About 20 years ago a younger brother of mine (Binodi Lal) had been suffering from consumption. We tried our best to save his life, but could not. We came to realize at last that his earthly career must soon come to an end, so we were in a state of constant dread on his account.

"It was about 10 at night, three days before his death, and I was attending my sick brother. I went into the next room to see if I could freshen up my energies a bit. A little while after I felt myself

extremely drowsy. Just then it seemed to me that something was hovering over my head. And then this something began to speak. I understood its language; it was addressing God in these words: "O, my Lord God! art Thou not merciful, But how are we to hold fast to that belief? Is not the whole family constantly praying to Thee for the life of the young lad who is ill? But Thou hast no pity in Thee!"

"When I heard this I woke up with a start. What I felt on that occasion can be well-imagined. Suddenly, however, I saw a light. I saw that it was emanating from the body of a beautiful young man. Keenly scrutinising his face, I discovered that he was my nephew Saroj Kanti (son of brother Basanta Kumar), who had died sometime before. He was dearly loved by the whole family. My nephew looked towards me and said: "Why are you so anxious? Uncle is now suffering, but he will be all right after three days." Saying this the figure vanished.

"My brother died exactly three days after I had seen the vision. I then came to realize that what the spirit of my nephew meant was that death would release my brother from the grip of the disease and end his sufferings after three days. But yet I could feel that men all live after death, live a happier life than they do here. This consoled me to a great extent. Let every one cultivate spiritualism and he will be able to defy many of the miseries of this world."

CHAPTER VIII

HEALING MEDIUM AND SPIRIT-HEALING

We have had occasion to notice that when some one is down with an incurable disease, the spirits of his relatives living in higher spheres, or some other spirits of equally high order, would make efforts to cure him, often with success. Some of the methods employed by such spirits are given below :

(a) By possessing the body of a good medium and making him mesmerise the patient or prescribe suitable medicine for him.

(b) By making the medium give good advice to the patient especially in cases of nervous or mental disorder.

(c) By making direct examination of the patient and prescribing or giving medicine.

(d) By prescribing medicine to the patient in his dream.

The mediums whose bodies are used for healing purposes are generally known as "healing mediums," but the actual healing is done by spirits (not mediums).

I am narrating a few instances of spirit-healing, which happened within my own knowledge, in the following pages.

Mahatma Sisir Kumar a Healing Medium

I have already mentioned before that Sisir Kumar was expert at mesmerising and hypnotising. Over and above he developed the powers of healing by mesmerism or passes. But it was apparent from his manner at the time that it was not actually he who

was healing but that he was doing so under the influence or inspiration of a superior discarnate entity. Here is an instance :

One morning, probably in 1867, a patient was brought to our local charitable dispensary. The patient could not stretch his knees, nor could he stand upright. Sisir Kumar was then present there and I was one of those who had accompanied him.

Sisir Kumar looked at the patient intently for sometime and, addressing the doctor-in-charge, Chandra Nath Karmakar, said that he would make the patient walk. This he said in such a determined tone that the doctor had no doubt that Sisir Kumar was under some foreign influence, and accordingly he let him do what he liked. Sisir Kumar then sat by the side of the patient and started applying mesmeric passes to the affected part. Shortly after, he commanded the patient in a grave voice to stand up. The patient thereupon obeyed the order like a mechanical toy and quietly walked home with the aid of his stick, to the surprise and admiration of all.

Moti Lal also a Healing Medium

Like Sisir Kumar, Moti Lal also acquired the powers of healing by mesmeric passes. Sisir Kumar has written thus about it in his "Hindu Spiritual Magazine": "Here is a personal experience of mine, which, whenever I think of it, gives me a thrill. I had taken some indigestible food, and that made me sick. I committed another outrage while suffering from acute diarrhoea; and this time found that I had brought upon myself cholera, the real disease. I felt that I was going to faint away from exhaustion and the griping of the stomach. My pulse was then sinking rapidly. My younger brother Moti Lal, who was with me sitting apart, had no idea of the danger which

had overtaken me. I called him to my side and told him to sit behind my back, so that I could lean upon him. He did as he was bid. I told him with great difficulty that I had got cholera; and a strange thing happened immediately after. His hands and limbs began to shake, and he showed by other signs that he was beside himself. It seemed that he had been suddenly overtaken by convulsion. I was so surprised that I could not utter a word, even to ask what the matter was with him. He, however, soon after regained some control over himself, and then he began to make passes on my back with his right hand. I then perceived that he was making mesmeric passes and doing this while in an unconscious state himself. I had practiced hypnotism, but he had never done so. I realised then what the matter was. It was this; I was in danger, and a good spirit was trying to nip my disease in the bud by these mesmeric passes. My brother was a good medium; a good spirit possessed him, so that he became unconscious for the time being and was in that state while making the passes to cure me. Every pass of his was followed by relief,—immense relief. I felt as if by these passes my brother was infusing into me new life, nay, strength and ecstasy. A little before, I was going to faint from fatigue and divers sorts of uneasy sensations; two minutes after, I felt strong, happy and disposed to go to sleep. I addressed not my brother, but the spirit: "Thanks, I am all right," and then fell asleep under an uncontrollable influence, from which I awoke quite refreshed—a new man. I know that God and His angels take care of us."

Unsuccessful in Binodi Lal's Case

Once again uncle Moti Lal tried to cure Binodi Lal by mesmeric passes when he was on his death-bed, but did not succeed. One evening when Binodi Lal was completely bed-ridden and was feeling great difficulty in breathing, Moti Lal was busy

nursing him. Suddenly he felt himself to be under some spirit-influence and started applying mesmeric passes over his outstretched body. After a little while Moti Lal commanded him to sit up which he did with some assistance, although he was much too weak to turn on his sides. Binodi Lal coughed, felt a little relief and lay down again tired. This process was repeated twice or thrice, but each time the patient felt weaker and weaker and could not sit up any more. Then he was seized with a sudden fit of coughing, he felt choked and his heart ceased to beat. Simultaneously his life was extinct. So just on the third day the vision of aunt Sthira Soudaminee was fulfilled; for Binodi Lal passed away just after three days.

Tarit Kanti Cured by Spirit

My cousin, Rai Bahadur Tarit Kanti Bakshi, M.A., F.R.C.S., after passing very creditably his M.A. in Chemistry, was appointed Professor of Chemistry in Robertson College, Jubbulpore, and was in service right up to the day of his death. He was as highly intelligent as deeply devoted, and as sympathetic with others' woes as eager to serve them. In short, he won many hearts by his sweet tongue and sweeter nature. He had practically no enemy.

In 1906 he was attacked with obsessive melancholia. At first no one knew anything about it, but when it was impossible to keep it secret, his relatives became anxious and made all possible arrangements for his treatment. Instead of improving, his malady became worse and worse. He loathed company and loved solitude, so he became unfit to discharge his professional duties. He could not even express what he really felt within himself. The only thing he loved was to cry aloud, by which the pressure on his heart was greatly relieved. He felt intolerable pain in the region of his heart. Sometimes he used to have fainting fits culminating in complete unconsciousness.

Sometimes he would declare that but for his great strength of mind he would have committed suicide to get rid of the insufferable pain. Throughout the night he could not get a wink of sleep and he always



TARIT KANTI BAKSHI.
Died on 30-3-28 (17th Chait, 1334)
at the age of 53.

brooded over something which he himself could not explain. When he was reduced to such a condition he was removed to Calcutta, and placed under the treatment of distinguished physicians but without any effect. At Jubbulpore he was his own master and could do what he liked. But in Calcutta, in the midst of a large family, he could not do so. Willing or unwilling he had to mix with many people and join in their conversation. The result was that he could neither get any time nor opportunity to brood over his own thoughts.

At this time we used to form home-circles regularly and Tarit Kanti was pressed to join them. He was learned in western science and so had no faith in spirits or in the possibility of communication with the spirit-world. On the other hand, being of a plain disposition, it was hardly possible for him to disregard the requests of his relatives. Consequently he was induced to join the circle with reluctance.



KISHALAYA KANTI GHOSH.

Died on 18-6-32 (4th Ashar, 1309)
at the age of 24.

At the first sitting the spirit of my cousin, Kishalaya Kanti, manifested itself through the medium. After the death of his father, Binodi Lal,

Kishalaya, then a boy of tender age, and his mother accompanied aunt Sthira Shoudamince to Jubbulpore and lived with Tarit's family. By long and close association Tarit Kanti had learnt to look upon Kishalaya as his own brother. Kishalaya also equally loved him in his turn. He had died a few years before Tarit Kanti was attacked with this disease. In these circumstances, although he could not quite believe that he was conversing with Kishalaya's spirit, his very name acted as a magnet, and at whatever came out of the medium's mouth, he felt some relief. At last some unknown influence acted on his mind and he was urged to join the circle without being asked to. Every day he used to have intimate talks with the spirit of Kishalaya and obtain information about matters which no one else but he and Kishalaya knew. Ultimately he was forced to admit that the entity, that possessed the medium and with whom he carried on conversation, was no other than the spirit of Kishalaya.

After this incident, his disease took a turn for the better. He developed a regular mania for sitting in the seances, and if he missed a single night he would become very unhappy. At this stage the spirits of Kishalaya, Tarit's father and other near relatives used to appear at the seances, talk to him familiarly and give him sound advice, and gradually brought him under their influence.

Obsessive melancholia made him altogether helpless and incapacitated him for all work. His physical and mental condition became so deplorable that it seemed that he would never recover. But by the unremitting efforts of the discarnate spirits and their sound advice, his mental weakness and the feeling of despair gradually vanished.

One of these days Kishalaya's spirit descended and spoke thus: "Look here, brother (i.e., Tarit Kanti), we are always trying to cure you of your

melancholia by keeping your company. But if you could summon up a little strength of mind by your own personal efforts, you would be able to recover completely in a short time." After explaining how best to make the effort, Kishalaya added: "When you have gained sufficient strength, I shall let you know the real cause of your malady." On hearing this, Tarit expressed his eagerness to know the cause at once, but he was told that his present state of mind and health was unfit for the reception of the news.

A fortnight passed and Tarit distinctly felt that half his mental trouble was gone, and he did not feel any very great strain in joining others in their amusements and household work.

Another incident of importance occurred about this time. Tarit Kanti's wife never sat in a circle before, but she was induced to sit in our family circle. She was quite unconscious of her mediumistic power, but it was quite apparent on the very first day of her sitting; she was possessed and fell into a trance. Within a few days she developed into an excellent medium, and since then both husband and wife were regular sitters. Everyday she got under the influence of Kishalaya's spirit and they spent their time in talking over various subjects. Some nights they were so engrossed in their conversation that they lost all count of time. The spirit of Tarit's father and those of other relatives also manifested occasionally and gave him words of advice. All these contributed greatly towards bringing him back to his normal condition.

One day Kishalaya's spirit told Tarit that the evil spirit of one of his relations, who had been his enemy in his life-time, was trying his best to do him harm. His name was also given. He was a very wicked man and as such was hated both by Tarit and his father. In this material world also he had tried to do them harm by various means. His earthly exist-

ence had come to an end soon after the death of Tarit's father. Evidently he could not give up his vicious propensities even in the next world. For three full years he persisted in his efforts at doing harm to Tarit and, as we have seen, with partial success too.

The day Tarit came to know about this, that very day an evil spirit controlled his wife, as would appear from the following symptoms. As soon as she fell into a trance her eyes became blood-shot, voice discordant and it gave vent to its spleen by referring to old sores which rankled in its mind. No one present had any difficulty in understanding that it was the manifestation of the same evil spirit which had haunted Tarit all these years.

Tarit's wife had never met this spirit in flesh, and it is doubtful if she had ever heard him speak either. But immediately she was possessed by it, her manner and behaviour changed so completely that all present were amazed. At last she was freed from the influence of this evil spirit after great difficulty. By the combined efforts of the spirits of Tarit's father and Kishalaya, the spirit was successfully driven away and it did not trouble either Tarit or his wife any further. Tarit Kanti went back to Jubbulpore and resumed his duties.

Healing by Mesmerism

We have all heard of the curing of diseases by mesmerism. Many have personal experience of it. Dr. Rashik Mohan Vidyabhushan wrote an article on the subject in the Bengali weekly journal "Sree Sree Vishnupriya and Ananda Bazar Patrika" of April 6, 1904. The following is the translation :

"On the afternoon of April 27, 1880, we were discussing about brain-power and mesmerism with great earnestness in our rented house at 49, Mukhtaram Babu Street, Calcutta, where, among others, were

present five of my old class-fellows of the Medical College who were then distinguished and experienced physicians. One of our student friends was lying very ill in that house, down with high fever. Dr. Bhagaban Chandra Rudra had been given a call. The patient was then delirious. His eyes were blood-shot and his temperature was 105° . We were sitting in another room, discussing whether it was possible to cure the fever by mesmerism, when Dr. Rudra arrived. We all accompanied him to the patient's room. Dr. Rudra after examining him prescribed a medicine and handed over the prescription to me.

After reading the prescription, I told Dr. Rudra that the same medicines had been administered several times before but without any effect. The only difference I could notice was in the dose. Dr. Rudra agreed that in that case the mixture would not have any effect on the patient, although he averred that it was the best prescription he could think of for the patient in his present condition. However, the mixture, as prescribed, was obtained and administered but without the least effect. Dr. Rudra, being informed of it, expressed his inability to do anything further.

Mesmeric healing was in great vogue at the time, and the subject had even found entrance within the sacred precincts of the Medical College. When this method of treatment was suggested to Dr. Rudra, he declared his want of faith in it and suggested the application of ice-bag on the patient's head instead. We complied, but twelve hours of continuous application produced no result.

Following my usual practice, I went to have my evening stroll on the river-side and found one *sannyasi* (ascetic) sitting in Prasanna Kumar Tagore's ghaut (bathing place). As his appearance bore the stamp of loving kindness I approached him with a view to getting into conversation with him, and he asked me

to take my seat. Fortunately he carried on the conversation in English, otherwise it would have been difficult for me to follow him in his mother-tongue, Hindusthani. Learning that I was interested in the medical science, he told me that there were many forms of treatment but that of the *Yoga* was the best.

I.—That's mere empty verbiage. I shan't believe it until I get practical proof of it.

Sannyasi.—(Smiling) All right, if you have got any patient put me to the test. I am sure to get a good certificate out of you by passing through it.

I.—I have got a patient on my hands just now, will you come over with me?

Sannyasi.—I can't go now as I have got some urgent work in hand. But if you will leave your address with me I shall come over in three hours.

Although I left the address with him, I could not shake off the feeling that the man, learned and large-hearted to all appearances, was a humbug at bottom; he did not mean to keep his word but only put me off with a lie.

On returning home I found the patient to be very restless and in full delirium. He was trying to get out of the bed and tie up his clothes in a bundle. The symptoms were grave, causing great anxiety to all present. Notwithstanding the fact that the application of ice-bag on the head was not having any effect, it was continued for three hours in the absence of any other alternative. Three hours passed, but there was no sign of the *sannyasi* yet.

I was asking myself if it was right for a *sannyasi* to tell such a lie on the sacred banks of the Ganges, when, lo and behold! I heard a cry of "Hara Hara Bom Bom Sri Madheo Sambho" coming from near the main entrance. On running downstairs, I found the *sannyasi* standing before me. I made my obeisance to him and led him forthwith to the patient's bed-side. He took a little water out of his gourd and

sprinkled it over the patient and the bed on which he was lying. He then squatted down in a posture of meditation and looked fixedly at the patient's eyes. At first the latter turned his head but the *sannyasi* forcibly put it straight with his hands and resumed his gaze. This went on for fully five minutes during which the *sannyasi's* gaze appeared to penetrate through the innermost recesses of the patient's brain and body, while the latter lay still and motionless with his blood-shot eyes fixed on the *sannyasi's*.

At last tears gathered at the corner of his eyes and they glistened with moisture. The *sannyasi*, however, did not relax his gaze until the patient closed his eyes. He then started making hypnotic passes over his body accompanied by the muttering of *mantras* until the patient fell into a deep slumber. The *sannyasi* then said that the patient would wake up at 12 midnight and ask for food when some milk should be given to him. He added smiling, "Give me my certificate to-morrow," and then departed without waiting for a moment.

Four of us remained in the sick-room keeping anxious watch for the appointed hour. At 11 o'clock the patient was found copiously perspiring, and shortly after the hour had struck 12, he softly muttered, "I am very hungry, let me have something to eat." His temperature had then dropped to 97°, there was no sign of redness in the eyes, and the breathing and pulse were normal. We gave him some milk to drink and dimmed the light. The patient said that he was feeling well and asked us all to rest. While all others went to bed I kept a solitary watch as there was a fear of the temperature dropping still further, on account of the perspiration, and complications setting in. Fortunately, however, there was no further sweat after midnight, and when I had assured myself by examining the pulse and the heart that there was no cause for apprehension, I also went to bed very much relieved.

When I went to the patient's room next morning at 7 o'clock, I found him awake and much better. There was apprehension of danger on account of the sudden intermission of fever. We discussed the advisability of administering quinine, but in the end we decided not to give any medicine. I proceeded instead to Prosanna Kumar Tagore's ghaut to give my certificate (or thanks) to the *sannyasi*, but strangely enough he had vanished leaving no trace of his whereabouts. Greatly disappointed, I returned home and had a chat with the patient. He had not the faintest idea as to how he got cured of the disease. He only remembered that he saw a vision at night in which the god Mahadeva looked at him with tearful eyes and he fell into a deep sleep. After this all was blank.

Thereafter the patient improved steadily without the aid of any medicine. But the whole thing was a puzzle to us. We could not get over the fact, how it was possible to cure such high fever, which had defied all known forms of treatment, by mere fixing the patient with one's eyes. And yet it was a case which happened right before our eyes. Several questions arose in our mind. Was the cure effected by some super-normal power as distinguished from human power? How could a man possess super-normal power? We had heard of healing by mesmerism, but Dr. Rudra explained to us that it was impossible to mesmerise a patient who had lost his natural consciousness, and so mesmerism was out of the question in this case. When all the facts of the case were communicated to Dr. Rudra he expressed his amazement and was unable to offer any plausible explanation. The patient was completely delirious at the time, was altogether incoherent in speech and uncontrolled in actions, and was incapable of concentrating his thoughts considered *sine qua non* for successful mesmerisation. His mind was totally unhinged and was completely isolated

from the outer world. He could not, therefore, adjust himself to the process of mesmerisation.

From the physiological point of view, I understood mesmerism to be this. After selecting a subject fit for mesmerisation, the operator would command him to look steadily at a bright object, like crystal or his own eyes. With some subjects the eye-sight would grow hazy in no time. Some would feel lethargic and sleepy, some would close their eyes and yawn, some would breathe heavily and quickly, and some would feel like fainting. All these are signs of nervous weakness on the part of the subjects chosen, and they would, therefore, be easily over-powered by a person of stronger nerve, the mesmeriser. After an individual is put to mesmeric sleep, his mind and actions are controlled entirely by the will of the operator. If he would tell the subject he was blind or dumb, the latter would act exactly as if he were actually blind or dumb. If garlic were placed in his hand and he was told it was rose, he would assert it was smelling like rose. In this way, an immoral operator could even satisfy his carnal desires on female subjects.

From these I conjectured that some designing hypnotists bring about these magical results by practising upon the nervous system of soft and simple subjects. I used to explain the matter by the nerve theories from physiology. I argued that there was a white thread-like substance in our brain disposed in a three-fold way. One of them rising upwards from the lower region connects the spinal cord with the hemispherical ganglia. Another spreading cross-wise connects the two hemispheres. The third unites the front one with the back. These substances are chiefly instrumental in producing human thought-forms. Modern metaphysicians and physiologists admit that mind is merely a congeries of the manifold intellectual faculties and for the proper working of mind various nerve-powers are required. Modern

physiology is dimly discovering what particular nerve of the brain is responsible for a particular function but when the entire system of this mysterious process is discovered then we shall be able to understand and explain all these phenomena through the action of the nerves.

But I could not understand how the ascetic controlled the deranged nerves of this highly delirious patient. This sort of patient is not subject to the influence of what is popularly known as hypnotism or what Dr. Braid of Manchester would call neuro-hypnotism. Those who are acquainted with pathology cannot certainly explain the action of the ascetic by neuro-hypnotism. So my theory of mesmerism failed to explain the present phenomenon.

Gift of Amulet from Unseen Hand

The late Dr. Hem Chandra Sen, M.D., formerly Professor of Campbell Medical School, Calcutta, wrote the following letter to the "Amrita Bazar Patrika," dated the 24th March, 1904, regarding a supernatural phenomenon :

"Will you please give the following a space in your paper to make known to the public phenomenon that might simply be termed miraculous. We all know that we are not living in an age of miracles and from as much as I have been able to infer it is not a jugglery. I have not been able to find out an explanation for the phenomenon and my only object in requesting you to publish it is to make it known to some able person who might investigate into the matter.

At 8 P.M. on the 16th March last, I was in professional attendance on a member of the family of Babu Rajendra Lal Mukherjee, M.A., B.L., of 3, Brajolah Mitter's Lane, in Jhamapukur. In the

sick chamber I found a student of the 1st year class of the Campbell Medical School (one of my pupils), Surendra Nath Das, seated on a wooden cot. While attending to my patient all of us were greatly concerned to find Surendra suddenly become stiff and unconscious in the sitting posture.

He was immediately laid flat, and his boots were taken off. Violent fits were then coming on him during which his body was twisted,—backwards, forwards and sideways, and in all sorts of possible and impossible manners. These fits came on repeatedly and each lasted for about two minutes at a time. His pulse, heart and respiration were normal during the fits, and although I pinched him, poked him with the blade of my pen-knife, and even burnt him with a lighted taper, he did not evince the slightest sign of any sensation. While in this state he talked of going with another through a thorny path in a very dark night. After sometime the fits were over, and he jumped up, took off his socks and coat, complained of excessive heat as also of severe pain in all the muscles of his body and finally enquired if he had a fit, and then stretched himself at ease on the wooden cot.

After a very short time the fits came on again, exactly as before. During these he began to talk with some imaginary individual. He talked of a tank, lotus flowers, bathing, and going to a temple. A violent fit came on and he cried out "Ma, Ma." The fits now became more and more violent, his body became curved as if he was trying to double himself towards his back, and he was lying supported on his abdomen with his head and hands (which were now clasped together as if in prayer) and his legs in the air. Babu Rajendra Lal tried to support his head and hands while he was in this most painful position. No persons but those intimately known to Babu Rajendra Lal were present at the time.

All of a sudden and without any warning a metallic amulet with the tape by which it is worn

complete (as it is when worn) fell from the air with a sound on the right hand of Surendra Nath and slipping it fell on Babu Rajendra Lal's arm, who at once got hold of it and placed it on the palm of Surendra. The fits were immediately over, he got up, wore the amulet on the right arm and was all right again."

It is a mystery why Surendra Nath fell unconscious, why and how the amulet was dropped in his hand and why his spasms were at an end immediately with the wearing of the same. We are relating the incident below as we have come to know of it after a searching enquiry.

In the ordinary meeting of the Bengal Theosophical Society held on the 13th July, 1904, Dr. Hem Chandra Sen came with a young man. Hem Babu said, "For the last one year, some spirit has taken possession of body of this youngman. The strangest part of the story is this that when one day the young man had severe spasm and epileptic fits, all on a sudden an amulet was dropped down in his hands and immediately he regained consciousness. Then he said that his younger brother had given him the amulet. The amulet sometimes disappears. Then there is no end to his suffering from spasm and fits. And again with the arrival of the amulet his ailments are cured."

This youngman is the above-named Surendra Nath Das. At this time he became acquainted with Rajendra Babu of Jhamapukur, who was a distinguished member of the Theosophical Society and a relation of Rai Bahadur Priya Nath Mukherjee.

Surendra Nath had imbibed the ideas of Brahmo Samaj long before, and had an earnest desire to eradicate all superstition. In 1901 he was a student of the Berhampore College and an inmate of the College hostel. One evening while returning to the hostel, he saw a person just like his younger brother standing on the road-side. He was dumb-founded.

With a view to ascertain if he had been mistaken, he looked at the person very carefully. He had no doubts, for he whom he saw before him could not be any one else but his younger brother. His brother had been long dead at the time, so he was very much perplexed. He got terribly afraid and was extremely astonished, but he summoned up courage to enquire if he was his younger brother. The answer was in the affirmative.

Whatever little doubt Surendra Nath might have had was removed thereby. He then ran away in mortal fright to his hostel and fell down senseless. Since then he had been suffering from nervous diseases off and on. Though he showed some improvement after long medical treatment yet he could not rally round completely..

Visit to the Next World in Sickness

The late Babu Asutosh Bose of Basirhat, 24-Perganas, was a devout Vaisnav and was a distinguished member of the Goudiya Vaishnav Society. He passed over only a few years ago. He published a wonderful super-normal incident in the issue of "Sree Sree Vishnupriya and Ananda Bazar Patrika," of 10th Baisakh, 1315. What he wrote was certainly not a figment of his brain, for he had seen every detail of the incident with his own eyes; besides, he gave a list of other eye-witnesses with their addresses in the article, to prove his *bonafides* and corroborate his statement. If, therefore, there was any deception or trickery in it, it would have been exposed long ago. The incident is given below.

Srijut Jatindra Nath Dey's home is in village Hadipur, in the sub-division of Baraset, district 24-Perganas. The village is situated about a mile to the south of Berachampa railway station in the Baraset-Basirhat line. One day, in the rainy season of 1314

B.S., Jatin Babu received intimation of the serious illness of his sister which was likely to endanger her life. On receipt of the news he immediately proceeded to the house of his sister's husband at Basirhat. On arriving there he found his sister lying unconscious and almost at the point of death. For ten days she had been down with typhoid; now she was senseless, still and cold, with eyes wide-open and pulse very feeble. She had been under the treatment of a distinguished local Kaviraj, Taradas Ghatak Kabibhusan, from the very beginning.

On the eleventh day, the patient's condition taking a graver turn, the Kaviraj prescribed *Suchikavaran*—a poisonous medicine generally administered in hopeless cases. This medicine was continued for six days but without any effect. On the seventh day, when there was no further hope of saving her life, Jatin Babu, as a last resource, called in a local allopath, Dr. Jatindra Nath Ghoshal, the best man available in the place.

The doctor, after examining the patient carefully for two hours, prescribed the application of a strong plaster on her shoulders with a view to bring back consciousness. The plaster was so strong that even a person on death-bed would shout in pain if it were applied on him. But strangely enough the patient, even after frequent application of the plaster, would not move even her little finger or show any sign of returning consciousness. There was no exclamation of pain either. Having no other remedy the doctor gave up all hopes and left.

All treatment or medicine was now stopped, and the relatives sat round the patient expectantly awaiting the coming end. The womenfolk started crying and Jatin Babu was beside himself with grief. The whole day passed like this.

After dusk the patient's husband collected some devotees and started Kirtan songs (devotional hymns of the Vaishnab sect). Hearing the familiar words of

the song "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, etc.," the neighbours feared that the worst had happened and hurried to the place, but they went back on finding that merely Kirtan was being sung. The Kirtan went on continuously for hours, up to 10 p.m., but the singers had been intoxicated with devotional fervour and remained dumb and motionless.

Jatin Babu had been out, so he did not know anything about the Kirtan. On his return when he found all the paraphernalia of the Kirtan, viz., drums and cymbals etc., and the party in that condition, he got into a terrible rage and rated them severely. "You fellows," said he, "are dead to all sense of decency and propriety. My sister is dying and you all are making merry with songs and music. Are you men or beasts?"

Ignoring Jatin Babu's rudeness, one of them very politely answered, "No, sir, we did not make merry, we were simply singing hymns in praise of God."

Jatin Babu.—We have had no sleep for these days, not to speak of the state of our mind, on account of my sister's illness. You had better clear out at once.

"Why, sir," cried another, "why should she die? your sister is all right."

Jatin Babu getting into a fury at this observation shouted out, "None of your humbug, leave the house at once, every one of you."

"Why do you call it humbug?" persisted the speaker. "Your sister is no longer ill. She will take rice (her normal diet) to-morrow."

"Look here," cried Jatin Babu, "is this the time for your insane talk? You are hopelessly shameless; that is why you are not stirring yet. The patient who has been lying unconscious for the last seven days and whose death is expected every moment,

—for such a patient you are prescribing rice! Surely you are”

“Sir, I am not telling a lie,” the speaker broke in. “What will happen to-morrow might wait, it will be sometime yet. I tell you that to-night at 3 o’clock your sister will call you “dada” (elder brother).

“Did you say,” cried Jatin Babu terribly excited, “that my sister will call me “dada” to-night at 3?”

“Yes, sir, certainly,” was the emphatic reply.

Jatin Babu, highly irritated and angry, was determined to teach him a good lesson. “And if she doesn’t?” said Jatin Babu, “what will happen then? Will you then allow me to tear off the string of beads (*mala*) from your neck, and snatch away your begging wallet?”

“All right, it shall be as you say,” was the quiet reply. “If your sister does not call you “dada” at 3 o’clock this very night, you can do as you have said. But if she does, what then?”

“I shall then,” cried out Jatin Babu excitedly, “become a Vaishnab by putting a string of beads round my neck and assuming a begging wallet.”

“You are in earnest, aren’t you?” exclaimed the devotee in great eagerness. “You will keep your promise, won’t you?”

“Yes,” replied Jatin Babu, “I shall certainly keep my promise.”

“Now, open your watch and see the time,” said the devotee.

Jatin Babu did as desired. It had then just struck one. He was so keen on teaching a lesson to the soi-disant prophet and exposing his hypocrisy that, unmindful of personal discomfort and inconvenience, he was determined to keep awake for another two hours and see to the finish.

For sometime everybody remained silent. The devotees went on telling their beads and remained concentrated in meditation. A short while after one of them suddenly cried out, "Brojo dada, what about a string of beads (*mala*), where shall we get it from?"

"Why, what do you want a bead string for at this hour of the night?" asked Jatin Babu.

"It shall have to be placed round your neck in the early morning," was the reply.

Jatin.—You had better look after your own bead-string. It is only half an hour more to 3 o'clock.

"Our heart is swelling with joy," said the devotee, "at the prospect of your wearing a bead-string round your neck and our placing a begging wallet in your hands."

Jatin.—I too am no less joyful at the prospect of tearing off your bead-string from your neck and snatching away your begging wallet, half an hour hence.

Half an hour passed like this in bandying words between the two. Immediately after 3 o'clock a faint voice was heard coming out of the adjoining room.

Jatin Babu was startled to hear the voice of a person who had been practically dead for the past seven days and would not respond to anything. He hurried to his sister's bedside and shouted out her name. She then answered "dada" "dada" in a faint voice.

Jatin.—What do you want? Here I am. Will you eat something?

Patient.—(In an abstracted voice)—"Dada, my Krishnavamini is very hungry. She wants to eat, give her something.

Thinking that his sister's mind had been yet wandering for not recovering her consciousness

completely, Jatin Babu cried in a loud voice, "You need not trouble yourself about that, will you yourself have something? I have got food here, take something, will you?"

Without replying to the question the patient said in a mournful voice, "Dada, where is Brojen's baby? Isn't he alive?"

Jatin.—He is now in Calcutta and well. I saw him only the other day.

Patient.—(Weeping) No brother, he is not alive, you are only patting me on the back. Alas! how his mother is crying. Her lap is empty, give my baby to her, that will lighten her sorrow a bit.

Jatin Babu then gave the patient some food. It was then nearly dawn and the birds were warbling their morning carols. Just then the Thana (Police Station) clock struck six. The patient felt a little better after the food and opened her eyes wide.

Then she was told that she had been unconscious for 7 or 8 days; her children had loudly called out to her with their lips on her ears and cried. Had she no knowledge of it? To that the patient replied in a faint voice that she knew nothing about it, that she had no outward consciousness but inwardly she was fully conscious. To the question if she felt any pain in that condition, she replied as below :

"I did not feel any pain. Although my physical body was here, my soul was elsewhere. I was totally indifferent to worldly matters. I was in a new world, so to say, where there was nothing of this material world. The trees, plants and fruits there are of peculiar shape and colour. The colour, dress,

¹ Brojen was the name of Jatin Babu's youngest sister. Her only son had died only 20 days before, but this fact was never communicated to the patient. Krishnavamini was the name of the patient's eldest daughter, who had died in Brindaban a year before at the age of six.

speech, the ways and manners of men and women, and of boys and girls, are also strange. How beautiful and lovely they are it is impossible to describe. Every one there is full of joy, ever happy and cheerful. Peace and bliss reign supreme there.

“I saw several boys and girls playing about in the garden in front of a palatial building. Among them I found my daughter Krishnavamini and Brojen’s baby. I was delighted to see them there. I had lost Krishnavamini for good and I never expected to see her again, so my joy knew no bounds when I found her there. I advanced towards her to take her in my arms, but she eluded my grasp and ran away. I asked her several questions but she would not answer. The first question I asked her was with whom had she come there. For answer she only laughed aloud. Then I asked her to come to my arms and accompany me home. To this also she laughed aloud and never came near me.”

Q.—You were there for 7 days. Is there day and night there like here?

A.—I never saw night there. I never looked up at the sky either, and so I did not see the sun also. There it is always like day but without the sun’s heat and glare.

Q.—Why did you cry aloud towards the end of last night?

A.—At first I made several attempts to make Krishnavamini talk but unsuccessfully. At last she cried out, “Mother, I am very hungry, let me have something to eat.” But as I had nothing to give her I felt greatly distressed. Then it struck me that perhaps ‘dada’ might help me, and hence I shouted out ‘dada,’ ‘dada.’ When I was thus shouting and crying my consciousness returned. I felt like one refreshed after a sound sleep.

“On opening my eyes I found that my new world had vanished—vanished also the men and women,

the boys and girls, Krishnavamini and Brojen's baby. I then remembered that my daughter (Krishnavamini) died a long while ago, and as I found Brojen's baby in her company I concluded that he had died also."

Meanwhile, with the break of dawn, the devotees were anxious to put the string of beads round the neck of Jatin Babu. One of them was ready with the string of beads (mala); they were all beside themselves with joy. No doubt was left in their mind, that God had vindicated the glory and greatness of devotion and the devotees that day.

With morning the devotees started singing Sankirtan with Jatin Babu in their midst. On hearing the news of this extraordinary happening the whole village flocked there, and in their presence a string of beads (distinctive sign of Vaishnavism) was placed round his neck. Jatin Babu had then received a new life. He was drunk with devotional fervour and very gladly submitted to this procedure. He was highly penitent also for his rude behaviour and his rough words to the devotees and begged their forgiveness. Thereafter, he accepted a string of counting beads at the hands of one of the greatest devotees, Syamadas Ghatak.

In narrating the above incident Babu Asutosh Basu has written: "This happened amongst my most intimate and near relations and I have personal knowledge of the incident from the beginning to the end. The following devotees too watched the events right through:

Syamadas Ghatak, of Basirhat; Brojonath Baidya, of village Mirzapore (Basirhat); Dhrubapada Das, of village Harishpur (Basirhat); Muktaram Das, of Baduria; Bipin Bihari Das, of Basirhat; Gourjiban Ghatak, of Basirhat; and Kalimadhab Sarkar, of Maheswarpur (Badu).

CHAPTER IX

MYSELF AND SAROJ KANTI

My cousin Saroj Kanti was younger to me by only a year and four months. We were great chums. Not only did we live together but we also played together, read together, bathed together and slept together. We spent the early years of our life like this, in each other's company. In 1871 our residence was removed to Calcutta and 8 years later, i.e., in 1879, uncle Golap Lal, Saroj Kanti and myself went on a visit to my eldest aunt at Dacca. Shortly after, Saroj was attacked with malaria and we all had to return to Calcutta. Even Calcutta would do him no good; so uncle Sisir Kumar took him, along with his family, to Baidyanath for change of air. Uncle Binodi Lal, his second sister Nila Kadambinee and also myself accompanied him.

Within a few days the fever left. He was well on his way to recovery, when he had an attack of dysentery which retarded his progress considerably. However, he got over it at last and was allowed his normal diet (rice). The day he was first allowed to take rice we were discussing our proposed return to Calcutta and he was very glad to learn that the doctor had permitted him to go with us. It was in the afternoon, and he was feeling very weak; and yet he added a few lines to my letter to Calcutta which I was then writing.

After dinner we went to bed in the same room on two different cots and after some further conversation about our Calcutta trip, we fell asleep. Towards morning, I was roused by the sound of sobbing and found Saroj quietly weeping. Unable to make out the cause I went over to his bed and caressed him with my hand. When he was somewhat composed, I asked him gently, "Why are you weeping, Saroj?" For excess of emotion he could not utter a single word at

first, but afterwards muttered: "I was dreaming." Considering the weak state of his health and the intensity of his emotion, I got a little alarmed and again asked him gently, "What was the dream about?"

Meeting with Departed Relatives

After remaining silent for sometime he replied slowly: "I was dreaming that my father, mother and other relatives, who had long been dead, had gathered round me with gloomy faces. I was crying and they told me a lot of things which I do not remember."

These words were spoken with so much emotion that I could scarcely withhold my tears, but restraining myself, lest any carelessness on my part should have any injurious effect on his health, I only remarked there was yet time for sleep and began to caress him gently. After a few minutes' silence Saroj said that he was feeling very cold, whereupon I brought a thick coverlet and wrapped his body. But it did not comfort him and he shouted out trembling, "I am feeling too chilly, my hands and feet are getting frozen." I felt them and found them icy cold.

It was in the month of Bhadra (September) when there was no sign of the cold weather. I was, therefore, alarmed at finding Saroj's limbs freezing cold and called the other members of the household to the room. They got up a fire and began fomenting the cold parts but without any effect.

At day-break the doctor was called in. After examining the patient, he prescribed some medicine and left. I sat by his side nursing and administering medicine, but there was no change in his condition. He grew from worse to worse.

Saroj Passes Away

The condition of Saroj caused general anxiety and alarm. I was possessed with the single idea of

nursing him and did not notice what others were saying or doing.

Turning towards me he said in a painful voice "Dada Babu, I am in agony."

His words and the expression of his face simply broke my heart. Concealing my real feeling, I tried to console him in various ways. Then I asked him gently, "Tell me, Saroj, what is troubling you?"

Saroj answered: "I do not know what it is." Then after a pause, "This hand seems paralysed." Immediately I rubbed it with the prescribed ointment.

Soon after he said: "This leg is getting benumbed," and I rubbed the medicine there.

Gradually all other parts of the body began to be similarly affected, and Saroj said in a feeble voice, "I am feeling intense agony, I do not know what to do, Dada Babu."

His voice became feebler still and indistinct. At this moment uncle Sisir Kumar entered the room and literally dragged me out to the adjoining room saying: "Take a little rest here, I shall be attending on Saroj."

I was then not my ownself. I did not realise why he brought me out of Saroj's room, nor did I realise that they were the last moments of Saroj's earthly life, although I saw all the symptoms with my own eyes. I lay there like one stunned.

I could just hear the faint voice of Saroj calling out "Dada Babu" at intervals. Then I felt drowsy and saw the following, as in a dream: My departed kinsmen of the other world had all gathered there and eager to take Saroj away with them. I begged to be allowed to accompany him and Saroj also was unwilling to go without me. At last, for some reason, I do not remember what, I was left behind and Saroj taken away in spite of his protestations. It appeared to me that Saroj was calling out to me by name in an appealing voice which grew fainter and fainter as the distance between us increased. At last Saroj went

out of my sight and I could not hear his voice any longer.

At this moment I was roused from my drowsiness by a chorus of loud lamentation, and I fainted.

My Trance State

Leaving the last remains of Saroj at Baidyanath, we returned to Calcutta. Time had gradually healed the wound of his death, leaving a delicate tenderness behind. One early morning I was sitting alone in a secluded place deeply engaged in reading a book, when I became conscious of a feeling of languor. I did not take any notice of it at first, thinking it would pass away, but when I found it persisting I tried to shake it off by rubbing my eyes.

Even this did not have the desired effect. I felt a sort of heaviness in the body and my eyes became fixed. Although I was still looking at the book, my mind was wandering. My hands and feet became torpid. Then I felt like crying and the feeling overwhelmed me completely. My emotion grew stronger, my breathing became hard and a feeling of complete numbness pervaded my whole being. Gradually my hands and feet, and then my whole body, began to shake, and I practically lost all consciousness. Then I began to sob. It was not really that I sobbed myself, but that some unseen force seemed to take possession of my body and sob piteously.

I retained sufficient consciousness to realise what was passing around me. I could hear what others were saying, but I lost all power of speech and independent thinking. In short, I was completely under the influence of some discarnate entity and could only act and think under its compulsion. Then I felt an inner urging to speak out but, overcome by emotion, I could hardly do it. After some heavy breathing I groaned out—"I am Saroj I cannot live without Dada Babu I can not stand the pangs of separation from him

I am here with my father and mother." Some such words like these also came out of my lips but I do not recollect them.

I felt very much exhausted and my nerves were tingling; the people about me dashed water over my face and eyes and fanned me till I was restored to my usual condition.

This was the first occasion my body was possessed by a spirit. After this I constantly sensed Saroj's presence around me; and whenever we sat in a circle his spirit would invariably possess my or some other sitter's body for communicating its thoughts. Gradually I developed into a good medium. While in trance I spoke about many things and in my automatic writings I wrote on various subjects. I have also seen clairvoyantly many spirit-forms and their abode of living.

A few days after the death of uncle Benodi Lal, uncle Ram Lal and myself sat in a circle when the spirit of Benodi Lal, using me as medium, carried on a lot of conversation with uncle Ram Lal. They were very much attached to each other in life, and uncle Ram Lal often sang to the accompaniment of drums played by his deceased brother. One day, after some conversation Binodi Lal wanted Ram Lal to sing a song and asked a drum to be handed over to me. It was done and Ram Lal sang. Strange to say, I, who had ever been innocent of the art of playing on drums, actually accompanied him like an expert. Verily, there are more things in heaven and earth than we know or ever hope to know of.

In my trance state I was never totally unconscious. As a matter of fact, I often had doubts about the origin of the answers given by me in that condition, i.e., whether they came out of my subliminal self or I was merely the mouth-piece of some discarnate spirit. At times words came out of my mouth about things of which I had not the least notion even a moment before, and then it became quite clear

to me that they were of some superior entity and in that feeling I derived great pleasure and satisfaction.

It so happened sometimes, that the spirit of an absolute stranger or of someone, of whom I had never thought would use my entranced body, introduce itself and volunteer information of which I could not possibly have any knowledge. Such information would invariably turn out to be correct on subsequent investigation.

In this way, for years together, I obtained incontrovertible proofs of the existence of after-life and the survival of soul after death, leaving no room for doubt.

We have read of many instances of the astral body leaving the physical body and roaming about not only in the earthly plane but also in other planes. Among those who have experienced such sensations in their own lives and recorded them in books are many scientists and philosophers. Some of the incidents of my own life are given below :

Many a time have I felt in dream that while descending a staircase I stepped on air without touching the actual steps ; sometimes as if flying from one place to another a few feet over the surface ; and sometimes fleeing upwards in fright through space. Those who have studied the subject will at once understand that all these abnormal movements were those of the astral body.

On rare occasions, when in deep meditation, I fell asleep or half-asleep and in my astral body saw shining spirit-forms and their luminous abodes in different spheres and got bewildered.

CHAPTER X

FAITH IN GOD

Sisir Kumar and Amiya Kanti

Amiya Kanti was the second son of Mahatma Sisir Kumar by his second wife. He died at the early age of 5 after intense bodily suffering for nearly two years. Sisir Kumar was strongly attached to his children. He sacrificed his personal pleasures, comforts and even food and sleep in nursing the sick child throughout his illness, but all his efforts proved fruitless. The child left for his last home in answer to the Lord's call.

Amiya Kanti's nick-name was Chhidam. The day previous to his departure he asked his mother to dress him up. He placed a looking glass before him and the mother decorated his face with sandal paste to her heart's content. In remembrance of this incident Sisir Kumar wrote a feeling poem in Bengali.

Just at the moment of his death Sisir Kumar collected all the family members in an adjoining room and sang a hymn softly to the accompaniment of *setar* (an Indian stringed instrument). The translation of a few stanzas is given below :

"My darling to Thee I yield
Glooming his temple bright.
Forgive me Thou, Oh forgive !
In grief, fountain of love !
Part I with him with riven heart,
My budding lotus to new life
I give unto Thee. If perchance
He weeps for me, dry his tears
With Thy ever-loving kiss."

The dead body was then taken out for cremation.

Sisir Kumar dedicated the third volume of his book "Sri Amiya Nimai Charit" to Amiya Kanti. In the dedication he wrote thus: "You have gone over to the other side, while I am left on this side. Such separation between father and son is too painful for us, mortals. Yet you and I have no cause to grieve, for you are now being taken care of by the Universal Father Himself. Much is expected of a son by his father. Don't make yourself miserable for not being able to repay any of your debts to your father owing to your early death. I cannot describe how much I have been benefited by you. A prey to the infirmities of the flesh, my mind had become blacker than coal, but my tears at your death partially washed away the stain. I shudder at the thought of what would have become of me otherwise. Moreover, with all my efforts I have not succeeded in loving my all, my all-in-all, my Nimai Chand (Lord Gouranga). Perchance my love for him might be increased by joining your name with his, that is why I have associated your name with him by naming the book "Amiya-Nimai Charit." Although I call him simply "Nimai" before the public, I always call him "Amiya-Nimai" at heart—just to see if your name could help me in drawing me closer to him."

That Sisir Kumar was not completely overpowered with grief at the death of his son and that his belief in the existence of after-life with the certainty of re-union with the dear departed remained unshaken, were wholly due to his firm faith in and complete surrender to God. This is amply borne out by the above.

Here I shall relate a little incident from my own life. When my first infant son was suffering pain from an attack of dysentery, I prayed to God to end his sufferings by taking him into His bosom. My earnest and heartfelt appeal was granted and my dearest son was given eternal rest by the All-merciful.

How far a man's faith and trust in God may go

and with what complete resignation he may accept His visitations will be evidenced by one more example.

Ranjan Vilash and His Four Sons

My cousin Ranjan Vilash Rai Chaudhuri is the third son of my father's sister, Nila Kadambinee. Ranjan is younger to me by two years and a half. We brothers and cousins lived and were brought up together in the same family from our childhood, and so we got the same education, the same training and the same tastes.

Ranjan Vilash was an officer in the Postal Department. He served as Post Master at the headquarters stations of several districts in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Wherever he went, his genial temper and affability of manners won him many friends. He retired on pension a few years back and is now living in Behala, a suburb of Calcutta.

His devoted wife left this world the very hour he made over charge of the Howrah Post Office to his successor. He had many children, most of whom are dead. In 1907, when he was Post Master of Arrah, he received the first shock of his life by the death of four of his sons who succumbed to cholera in one single day. I shall let Ranjan Vilash relate the incident in his own words which will shew what deep faith he had in God.

Letter of Ranjan Vilash

“Mejdada,—It is an indisputable fact that if you have got real faith in God, and therefore firm belief in the existence of after-life, even the greatest calamity cannot crush you. In response to your invitation to give you a written statement about the state of my mind 26 years ago, when I lost four of my sons in a single day, I am writing this letter :

I was Post Master of Arrah in 1907. One evening in October, Babu Atul Chandra Banerjee, a local munsiff, sitting on the verandah of the post office, was reading "Ram Krishna Kathamrita", with great unction, and Dr. Annada Prosanna Ghatak, Babu Jatindra Lal Mitra, Vakil, and myself were listening attentively to him, when some one from inside came and said that my son Mohan had been passing diarrhoeic stools. I was so much engrossed that I did not like the disturbance, and simply told the man to give him a dose of "China I". After 20 or 25 minutes when the reading was over, I went inside and found my 5-year-old boy Mohan easing himself near a papaya tree and softly singing to himself "O, All-merciful Lord Gouranga, take me over."

After examining the stool, I was greatly alarmed and waking up my eldest son, Nitai, who was then asleep, asked him to go for the doctor. Nitai was then a strapping youth of 16.

Assistant Surgeon Kali Prosanna Banerjee came and declared the case to be one of cholera. The same night my eldest son, Nitai, and my third son, Mukunda, were also attacked with the fell disease. The following morning Munsiff Atul Babu came and had my second son, Sachi, and my fourth son, Murari, removed to his house. Shortly after, my youngest son also caught the infection and was down. By evening all the four sons left this world one after another, such was the virulence of the disease.

I was then almost in a stupefied condition. I felt as if my departed relatives had come to take my sons away with them. My wife, a staid, sober woman of great fortitude, gave way at last. I said to her, "The boys are going to a better place, where they will be well looked after by my mother. We shall get them again when we go there; so hold your soul in patience. It was time for them to go; so don't delay, spread the cerements over their bodies." Personally I looked after all the funeral ceremonies enjoined by our religion.

There was a great commotion over this in the town. The Civil Surgeon, the District Magistrate and other high local officials called on me to express



Ranjan's wife SAILAHALA and her 3 sons,
NITAI, MUKUNDA and MOHON.

their condolence. My Bengali and Behari friends also were not behind-hand. The Superintendent of

Post Offices also, on receipt of a telegram, came forth-with from Sewan (Chapra district) with his wife. Coming straight from the station he himself entered the office-room while his wife entered the zenana to console my wife. He was astonished to find me at work as he had expected to see me prostrated in bed instead. Not only he but others also were struck by my strength of mind.

I am neither a strong-minded nor a prayerful man. I wonder whence I got such strength of mind in those days. But I believe that it was from my worshipful maternal uncle, Mahatma Sisir Kumar, and from my religious preceptor, Srila Bejoy Krishna Goswami, that I derived the requisite strength for conquering this grief.

When home-circles were formed in the house of my maternal uncle in my childhood I used to sit by the side of my mother or aunt. When I grew older I used to be one of the regular sitters in the seances held after the death of Saroj Kanti and uncle Binodi Lal. I did not perhaps let anybody else but you and uncle Golap Lal know that I possessed mediumistic power. I have still got that power because even now I occasionally sense the presence of my departed relations. The belief that they live after death in a different plane and that we shall be again united to them grew in me from early childhood.

Uncle Sisir Kumar's religious principles briefly were—(1) God exists; (2) He is All-merciful; and (3) He is attainable. He explained these principles repeatedly to me. He used to say that if one can believe God to be All-merciful, belief in the existence of after-life will spontaneously follow. The tearing away of the dearest son from his parents' arms can only be characterised as an act of wanton cruelty, and so how can the All-merciful perpetrate such an act? Separation promotes love; and the certainty of re-union after death becomes all the more sweet. Hence even such an apparently "cruel" act is justified. Such

was his instruction. But the things we have actually seen in the circles offer irrefragable proof of the indestructibility of the human soul and make one's belief in the existence of after-life all the stronger.



BEJOY KRISHNA GOSWAMI.

Died on 22nd Jaista, 1306 B.S. at the age of 58.

Hearing of the success of the Amrita Bazar circles a new circle was formed at Krishnagar with uncle Moti Lal (who was then a student of Krishnagar

College), his class fellow Nagendra Nath Chatterjee, and my preceptor Bejoy Krishna Goswami among the sitters. I have heard that my preceptor was a good medium. I have seen that when he was absorbed in *yoga* (or meditation), or in a trance condition, his astral body detached itself from his physical case and roamed in spirit-land. Sometimes other discarnate spirits used to come and talk to him. After returning to his normal state he used to say that such and such spirits had come and spoken to him. My early instincts about the existence of after-life grew into conviction when I heard all these from the mouth of my preceptor. I can distinctly feel that my preceptor and near relatives, though living in heaven, constantly help me in my daily pursuits. That is why I began this letter with the statement that the only means of conquering grief is to have implicit faith in the mercy of God, and constant remembrance of the fact that the soul is immortal and that the love and affection of the near and dear ones does not decrease after transition.—Your affectionate Ranjan”.

CHAPTER XI.

PORTRAIT OF THE DEAD

As it is not possible to paint a portrait without one's personal presence or another representation as model, so it is not possible for a photo to be taken of a man without his personal presence or another such representation before a camera. But is it possible to paint a dead man's portrait in the absence of his photo or any other pictorial representation? The invariable answer will be—impossible. But nothing is really impossible under the sun. That it is possible

to paint a dead man's portrait without any extraneous aid will be evident from the incident related below :

Spirit Painting of Payash Kanti

Payash Kanti was the third son of Mahatma Sisir Kumar. Sisir Kumar wrote the sixth volume of "Sri Amiya Nimai Charit" shortly after his death and it was dedicated to him. In the dedication he wrote :

"When I was 70 and you were 25, you suddenly left me for good after only a day's illness. I never dreamt for a moment that I should be able to bear your separation, and still I did. I am now telling you how I did it. I was old and it was not possible for me to worship or carry on my devotions by singing hymns, You filled this want in me, in as much as you were my constant companion and always regaled me with music in praise of God. Simultaneously with your passing away I was faced with another calamity—all my musical worship came to an end. Yet when you left me I thanked God with all my heart. Paradoxical as it may seem it is true all the same, and God is my witness. A better and more learned musician than Tan Sen was never born in this world. His compositions are incomparable alike for rhythm and tune. All that he taught had been practically lost but for a remnant in the throat of Ram Lal Maitra of Rangpur, from whom you learnt your music. You always longed to be with Tan Sen and obtain mastery of the art like him. Now you have got that opportunity, and I am sure you are utilising it by singing hymns to the Lord to your heart's content. Why then should I be selfish and mourn your loss ?

"When you left me I intended to have your portrait painted, and I am glad to say that a famous medium of America has fulfilled my desire. The portrait was completed in 20 minutes by an unseen hand in broad day-light and in the presence of many

persons. It has been so well painted that I doubt if there is any artist in this world who can execute such a fine portrait in less than a month.

"I frequently look at that picture, and whenever I do, it comes forcibly to my mind that the Giver of our life, far from forgetting us immediately after bringing us into the world, always thinks of our well-being,—for He is the fountain-head of love. After giving life He keeps us in this world for a certain time, and after death, takes us to another and a better world. There is no bereavement, no death, no disease, no darkness in that world. There we live for ever with those we love. When I think of this I sincerely regret my inability to worship God, who is the life of our life, with all my whole soul."

The incident of portrait-painting by an unseen hand, referred to above, is described below in detail :

About this time, 1908, Mahatma Sisir Kumar read of the marvellous power of two mediums, known as the Bangs sisters of Chicago, U.S.A., in producing portraits of the dead through spirit-agency. Their powers in this direction were personally testified to by a Madrassi gentleman, named Subba Rao, who, during his visit to Chicago, had his deceased wife's portrait painted in his presence, in broad daylight, in about twenty-five minutes and without the aid of any photograph or any other likeness, and under conditions from which all chances of fraud had been eliminated. Mr. Rao published his experiences in his own paper, called "The West Coast Spectator," Calicut, at the time, and later they were quoted in the "Hindu Spiritual Magazine" published from Calcutta by Mahatma Sisir Kumar. Having read about the extraordinary powers of the Bangs sisters, Sisir Kumar became anxious to get a portrait of his deceased son painted through the same agency. With this object in view he wrote a letter to one of his old friends at Chicago to make the necessary arrangements. But the "friend" in question was an out-and-

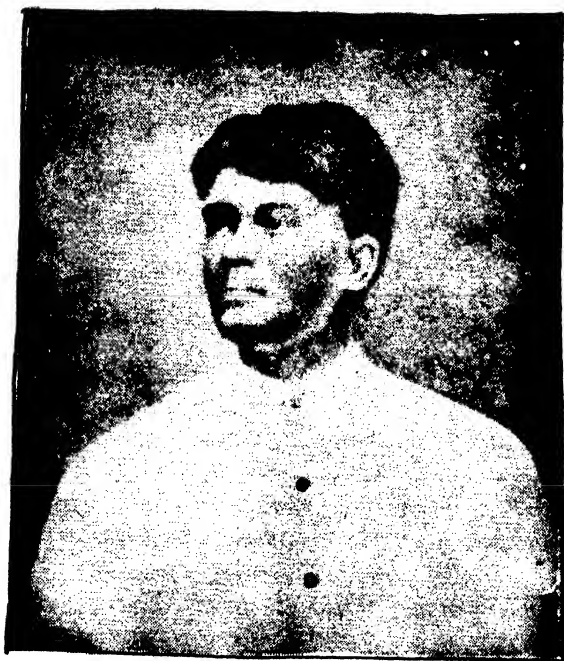
out sceptic; he had no belief in life after death, or in the immortality of soul. Consequently, in reply to Sisir Kumar's letter he wrote back dissuading him from wasting money on his fruitless endeavour. But Sisir Kumar was not to be so easily dissuaded. At last his will prevailed and he persuaded his friend to carry out his wishes. Necessary funds to meet the expenses and a photo of Payash Kanti were forwarded to him. The photo was sent not with the object of aiding the mediums but for helping the "friend" to check the portrait produced by them by finding out if there were any similarities between the two. Strict injunction was given, at the same time, not to show the photo to either of the mediums or to any of their acquaintances before the "Spirit Portrait" was produced.

Adopting all necessary precautions against fraud and accompanied by a friend equally sceptic and a confirmed non-believer in the existence of spirits, the "friend" went to the Bangs sisters to hold the experiment. With a view to eliminate the least element of suspicion they took the additional precaution of taking their own canvas with them on which the portrait was to be painted. On that particular day only one of the sisters was at home. It was 11 o'clock on a bright sunny day and the canvas was stretched across the only window of the room, giving on the public street below. It was not possible for any outsider to enter the room without their knowledge and paint the portrait secretly before two watchful pairs of eyes. In the room itself were the two friends and the medium, and sufficient light was percolating through the canvas to enable the anxious friends to notice every stroke on the canvas if and when it was made.

The Bangs sister sat close to the "friends" at some distance from the canvas. After gazing steadfastly on the wall for sometime, she said that she could see the figure of a young man and described

his features. The "friends" were fairly struck with the description as it agreed exactly with the photo of Payash Kanti. After this the medium walked up to the canvas and, touching it, asked the "friends" if the portrait, they wanted to be painted, should be his earthly likeness or his spirit-form. The "friends" naturally asked for the former.

Strange to say, no sooner had this wish been expressed than there floated a smoky or foggy substance slightly above the canvas, but instantly disappeared. Simultaneously the shadow of a man's



PAYASH KANTI GHOSH.
Died on 25-4-09 (12th Boysak, 1316)
at the age of 25.

face appeared on the canvas which gradually developed its lineaments. Our "friends" then realised that some unseen or shadowy hand was painting the portrait effectively screened from view. The picture suddenly disappeared from the canvas and appeared

again, twice or thrice till it was complete—i.e., till enlarged but exact replica of the photo was found clearly painted on the canvas.

The whole operation took about twenty minutes and the picture was such a marvellous reproduction that, according to Mahatma Sisir Kumar, it could never be executed even by an expert painter in less than a month. Although painted twenty-five years back it looks as fresh now as new. It is still in the possession of the family, and a block from it is being printed in this book.

From the incidents related in the foregoing pages it will be clear that Mahatma Sisir Kumar was a firm believer in the existence of after-life and the immortality of soul.

CHAPTER XII

PROPHETIC DREAMS

Amritamoyee's Wonderful Dream

On the full moon night of the 15th Paus, 1262, (29th December, 1856,) my grand-mother, Amritamoyee, dreamt this strange dream in her sleep: Two celestial nymphs approached me and I made them welcome with great reverence. The younger of the two did not take it kindly and got very much annoyed. "You need not welcome us like this," she said sharply. "I am going to burn your husband and sons to death to-night."

At this time my grand-father, Hari Narayan, was a practising pleader at Jessore, and his three sons, Basanta Kumar, Hemanta Kumar and Sisir Kumar, were with him prosecuting their studies in the Government School. As soon as the nymph uttered these words Amritamoyee saw before her the house, in which her husband and sons slept, suddenly catch fire. Terribly frightened by this vision she fell

supplicating at her feet. The heart of the elder nymph was softened and she induced the former to forgive her for that time. At last she relented and said, "All right, I forgive you this time. You have long allowed the world to estrange your mind from God; if you are anxious for your own welfare then devote yourself to religion and its practices. If in future you are found wanting you shall have to pay the penalty in this way."

News came from Jessore the following day that the house in which Hari Narayan had been sleeping with his sons caught fire at dead of night of that very identical day. It was in the depths of winter when they were all fast asleep, covering their bodies with quilts, and they were quite unconscious of the fire even when it had spread over nearly half the room. Someone in an adjoining room suddenly woke up and, noticing the perilous condition they were in, began to shout which roused my grand-father, and with great difficulty he succeeded in narrowly escaping with his sons.

Story of Sisir Kumar's Dream

Mahatma Sisir Kumar has recorded the description of one of his dreams in an issue of the monthly magazine, the "Sri Sri Vishnupriya Patrika" of the fifth year. It was his personal experience and he believed that his elder brother's spirit had actually appeared before him in his dream. This is the story :

Sisir Kumar was greatly afflicted by the death of his elder brother and found the world empty without him. Not only was Basanta Kumar his eldest brother, but he was also like a preceptor to him. Sisir Kumar used to say that his character was moulded by his brother as a clay-figure is moulded by the potter: But Sisir Kumar possessed great strength of mind. His youth and unconquerable will soon obtained mastery over his grief and he went

through his usual routine of work, but he was always absent-minded and suffered from occasional lapses of memory; he almost forgot the date of his brother's death, even the month.

About this time he saw his brother in a dream towards dawn. Basanta Kumar, sitting by his side, addressed him thus: "Sisir, to-day is the anniversary day of my death and so I have come to see you." Thereafter they had a good deal of intimate talk till emotion overpowered them. Morning had fairly advanced when Sisir Kumar woke up. He had no recollection of the dream but he was vaguely conscious of something happening over night that perturbed him very much.

While in this state of mind Sisir Kumar went out for a walk with an intimate friend of his. All on a sudden the details of the dream came clearly before his mind and he said to his friend, "Last night my brother appeared before me in a dream and told me a lot of things, all of which I do not remember. But I recollect this much that he reminded me of yesterday being the anniversary day of his death and that was why he came to see me. His friend demurred saying that his brother's statement could not be correct as he had died in the month of Falgoon while it was then Chaitra."

Sisir Kumar, on the other hand, was under the impression that his brother had died in the month of Baisakh. However, to make sure, he returned home forthwith and going to one of his elderly relatives ascertained from him that the date of Basanta Kumar's death was the 15th of Chaitra. But this also did not agree with the date given by Basanta Kumar in the dream, which was the 12th of Chaitra. Sisir Kumar was greatly puzzled and thought that the difference of three days might be due to the different method of calculation obtaining in the other world. And yet he was not fully satisfied with this fanciful explanation. At last he heard that the correct date had been noted

in the family almanac, and on examining it he found to his surprise and joy that the date was really the 12th of Chaitra—that given by his brother.

CHAPTER XIII

DEATH-AT-WILL

Mahatma Sisir Kumar

Sisir Kumar left this material world for his heavenly home on Tuesday, the 10th of January, 1911, at 1 o'clock in the afternoon. The sixth part of "Sri Amiya Nimai Charit" was then in the press. As there was some delay in printing, he spoke thus to me a few days before his death: "Mrinal, see that I can finish the last part of 'Sri Amiya Nimai Charit' before I go." Little did I know then that his end was so near.

As a matter of fact, even three days before his final exit, i.e., on Saturday, he went in his carriage to Dr. Priya Nath Nandy at Sealdah, a distance of about 3 miles, for electric treatment. Next day he got a slight fever following an attack of cold. He was comparatively better on Monday, and on Tuesday morning he was free from fever. He got up very early on Tuesday and, after going through his morning ablutions and devotions, he took his bath and his usual food. Then he corrected the final proof of the last form of Part VI of "Sri Amiya Nimai Charit" and made it over to me. "To-day I have finished my work of this world," he said. "I have no more ties here. Now I can die with a free and easy mind." About this time a doctor came to visit him and, after examining him, declared that he was perfectly well that day. Sisir Kumar observed smiling, "It is true I am better, but this is my last meeting with you, doctor."

Shortly after this, leaving his youngest daughter, Suhash Nayana, to attend on him, we went to take our morning meal. Sisir Kumar then squatted in a corner of the room, leaning on a pillow, and took a short nap, according to his daily wont. After that he enquired if all the family members had taken their meals. On being answered in the affirmative, he was pleased and, a little while after, sitting in the same posture, he uttered the words "Nitai Gour" and lifted up his index finger. His youngest daughter, who happened to be close by, getting alarmed at her father's condition, called out the other members of the family. On entering the room we found him leaning on the pillow with closed eyes, apparently asleep. Very often he used to sleep like this, so we did not think much of it. A few minutes after, exactly at 1 P.M., he left his physical body and went to his heavenly home.

Every one was struck with the wonderful expression of his face at the time. Soon after, a photo was taken of him in the same attitude. When printed, very few could say that it was the photo of a dead body, it looked as if he was sleeping in comfort. Even the photographer, who had taken many photos of dead bodies before, had to admit that he had never seen such an expression of face in a dead body.

Pandit Dinabandhu Vedantaratra

Pandit Dinabandhu Vedantaratra, a very pious man, also departed this life like Sisir Kumar in the month of January of 1911. His piety was widely known in the locality. With what ease he shuffled off this mortal coil at his own free will is related below :

In the month of Sravan he fell ill, recovered for a time but again got a relapse. At this time he told a visitor that his days had been numbered.

A few days after this, one Monday morning some friends called on him when he was deeply engaged in contemplation of his deity, Govinda, in his bed-room facing the temple of the god. Morning wore on when he asked someone to read aloud the sacred "Chandi." Noticing the faulty pronunciation of the reader he went on correcting him. After this he asked Babu Harendra Nath Mukherjee, a great devotee, to read out to him the 11th and 12th chapters of the Geeta. As he listened, his face lighted up with ineffable joy, and thrilling with emotion he joined Mr. Mukherjee in expounding the meaning of the stanzas. The reading over, his handsome face became brighter still, and with his heart overflowing with devotional fervour he sweetly intoned the mystic formula for about 15 minutes. Thereafter he uttered the words "Joy Guru", "Joy Guru", "Joy" (i.e., praise be to the Preceptor) and then his voice became faint and after resigning his breath he went to his long account. His body underwent no change, on the other hand his face shone with an unearthly light with his rapt eyes upturned heavenward.

Padma Lochan Ghosh

I have already said elsewhere that my grandfather, Hari Narayan, passed over in the month of Paus, 1270 B.S. Just a year after, his old father, Padma Lochan, followed him at the age of 82. His death was also a strange event almost akin to death-at-will.

Notwithstanding the loss of his versatile son, Hari Narayan, to whom he owed all his name, fame and wealth, his mind was not unsettled. He had his *shradh* performed at considerable expense, and in justification he said: "I may be unfortunate myself-but he was fortune's favourite, why shouldn't I have his *shradh* performed on a liberal scale?"

Now I am relating the circumstances attending the death of my great-grand-father, Padma Lochan. One day he had slight fever and he immediately expressed his desire of being removed to the bank of the Holy Ganges. One of his nieces who did not take kindly to the idea said: "Uncle, have you forgotten the calamity that befell us the last occasion you were removed to the bank of the Ganges?"¹

Padma Lochan was very much put out by her words. "Do you all think," he said ruefully, "that I shall live for ever and never die?" "Let it go," he added in great vexation after a space, "if my faith in my Mother goddess Kali be sincere, my death here shall be as meritorious as death on the bank of the Ganges." Then calling our family-priest, the late Dwarkanath Bhattacharyya, to his side he said, "Bhattacharyya, if you are a true Brahmin and if I have got firm faith in Mother Kali, then to-morrow at this hour my connection with this world shall cease." He then presented him with a costly *shawl* and with deep reverence made his obeisance to him.

Next morning found the old man engaged in his morning ablutions. My father Hemanta Kumar after feeling his pulse said, "Your fever has left you, you must now take some quinine." Highly incensed at the suggestion he flew out at his grandson saying "*Shala*,² do you think I am going to save my

¹ This has reference to the incident recorded in "Our Family Reminiscences" written by Sthira Soudaminee which is as follows:— "Nine months before my father's death, my grand-father developed an aversion to all food. My grand-mother's death a few months back had weighed heavily upon his mind. He longed for death and was anxious for his removal to the bank of the Ganges. My father at last consented and sent him to the Chakdah river-side. There he completely recovered and returned home in spite of the objections of my father made in pursuance of the age-long superstition that it is inauspicious for the family to bring back home a person who was removed to the bank of the Ganges to breathe his last. My father had said in annoyance: "When father has returned home in the teeth of opposition, my own death is certain." As a matter of fact this prediction came out true as my father died a few months after this.

² *Shala*—an opprobrious epithet signifying wife's brother; often applied by grand-fathers to their grandsons in mild, playful rebuke.

life—the life I am so anxious to get rid of—by taking medicine?”

After the ablutions were over, he changed his clothes and finished his morning devotions. After that he took some grapes, pomegranates, oranges and other fruits, and then began chewing betel. Although he was 82, he had all his teeth intact.

Then he went indoors to have a nap. My second grand-father's eldest son suggested that his bed might be made on the floor, instead of on a cot, as he would be more comfortable there. This brought a smile to his lips and he said, “You can make my bed on the floor now, but very soon the bare floor will be my bed.”

However, a bed was duly spread and he lay down on it. Servant Panch Cowrie was left there to attend on him, while the others went downstairs to have their meals. Shortly after, my second grand-father's second daughter-in-law went into the room and noticed his face covered up with a quilt, gently moving. She got a little agitated over it and asked Panch Cowrie to uncover his face. His eyes were fixed in an upturned gaze and he was promptly removed to the ground floor. He was then telling his beads which he had placed on his breast after removing them from his neck. With his ears ringing with the chorus of God's name loudly uttered by the assembled relations, his soul winged its flight to its eternal home.

CHAPTER XIV

STUDY OF SPIRITUALISM AT JESSORE

It appears from a note written by Mahatma Sisir Kumar in the "Hindu Spiritual Magazine" (Vol. III No. 1) that he never sat in any circle other than his home-circles, save and except one at Jessore. In that circle were the famous play-wright Rai Bahadur Dina Bandhu Mitter, Pandit Srish Chandra Vidyaratna (Deputy Magistrate), Sanjib Chandra Chatterjee (another Deputy Magistrate), Girish Chandra Roy Chowdhury (Subordinate Judge), Raj Krishna Mitter (Magistrate's Head Clerk), and a few others. After a few sittings Dinabandhu's hands gave indications of automatic movement on the table and it looked as if he wanted to write something. Raj Krishna and a few others suspecting trickery on Dinabandhu's part, poked fun at him.

Sisir Kumar, on the other hand, who had ample experience of seances at home and was conversant with the signs manifested by a person under control of a discarnate entity, was convinced that Dinabandhu's behaviour tallied with genuine spirit-manifestation, and suggested that a pencil be put into his fingers. When this was done and a piece of paper placed on the table, the medium started scribbling rapidly. Suddenly the words "Kuran Sarkar" were found written indistinctly which, of course, conveyed no meaning to any one. After recovering from his trance, Dinabandhu expressed surprise at finding that name and said it was that of the late Gomasta (a zamindary officer) of their family, who had died long ago. He had never even thought of him.

In another sitting Girish Chandra Roy Chowdhury fell into a trance. He spoilt quite a lot of paper by scribbling and scratching, but ultimately to the

amazement of all, the name of Milton, the great poet, was written. On this he was asked to write a Latin



DINA BANDHU MITTER.
Died on 1-11-73 (17th Kartik, 1280)
at the age of 45.

verse. After tapping the table violently with his right hand for a little while, the medium produced something in Latin, but as the language was unknown

to those present, it was sent to the Divisional Inspector of Schools, Mr. Clarke, then on tour, who said that it was an unfinished Latin verse with many mistakes.

Raj Krishna Mitter and His Book on Spiritualism

Raj Krishna Mitter was Head Clerk of the Collectorate of Jessore when the brothers—Hemanta Kumar, Sisir Kumar and Moti Lal—were living there. In course of time a great intimacy sprang up between them. Raj Krishna, having suffered a number of bereavements in early life, was admitted to our family circles on several occasions. Having lost later his service for some reason or other, he removed to Calcutta where he published his book "Shoka Bejoy" (Victory over Sorrow) in 1881. The incidents of Jessore, related in the foregoing pages, have been taken from this book.

What led him to write the book would be clear from the following extract from it: "It was 17 years ago (in 1865) that Hira Lal, younger brother of Hemanta Kumar and Sisir Kumar, Joint Editors of the "Amrita Bazar Patrika" (then a vernacular journal), passed over to the other world steeping the whole family in deep sorrow. Both the editors were my intimate friends and so I shared their sorrow with them equally. And their mother—that highly-gifted, intelligent and pious lady, a model Aryan woman—she was beside herself with grief. She never cried, but the secret fire of sorrow and anguish smouldered within eating into her vitals, nearly burning her heart to cinders. At that time Sisir Kumar formed a seance at home with some of the members of his family as sitters. It did not take Hemanta Kumar and Moti Lal long to develop into mediums. The spirit of her departed son, Hira Lal, was the first to manifest himself in this circle. Her grief was

considerably assuaged by her daily conversation with her beloved son. She got so much habituated to them that she became impatient for evening when the seance was usually held. I had an idea that there was no remedy or antidote for grief. But my eyes were opened on discovering the consoling effect of spirit manifestation and communication on a disconsolate and heart-broken parent. This was the reason which first prompted me to write my book "Shoka Bejoy."

The accounts of the seances held at Amrita Bazar were regularly published in the newspapers from the beginning. They were avidly read by people taking interest in the subject at Jessore, Calcutta, Krishnagar and other places where also regular circles began to be formed. I have already referred to a Jessore circle attended by Sisir Kumar, where the spirit manifestations through Dinabandhu were at first received with doubt and distrust by Raj Krishna and a few others, but they were finally persuaded to accept them as genuine on Sisir Kumar explaining the matter to them. Raj Krishna afterwards realised that a cultured and honest man like Dinabandhu could hardly resort to trickery, so there must be some solid truth behind those manifestations. This gave rise to his desire for a deeper study and investigation of the subject of spiritualism.

Raj Krishna has recorded in his book : "On the very next day I formed a new circle and sat in it regularly and continually for two years. The many wonderful things I have seen at seances during this period have completely healed all the deep sores of my heart caused by one bereavement after another, and in their place have grown luxurious plants of hope laden with fruits and flowers. Birth and death are nothing but this-life and after-life—this house and the other house. I have fully realised their true implications."

The book 'Shoka Bejoy' being out of print and unavailable, I am giving below brief accounts of some of the extraordinary phenomena which occurred in Raj Krishna's 'circle'.

I

In the very first day's circle a young man, Kayastha by caste, aged about 23 or 24 years, fell into trance-sleep in about a quarter of an hour. Within a short time the fingers of his right hand began to tremble gently, a pencil was put into them and he started scribbling on a piece of paper. Then in answer to questions the name of the discarnate spirit (under whose influence he was writing), his home address while alive, the circumstances of his death 60 years back, the story of his only daughter's widowed daughter and many other things capable of verification were written on the paper.

To verify the above informations a letter was sent to the local Sub-Inspector of Police on the following day. It appeared from the reply received a week after, that there lived a well-to-do farmer of that name 50 or 60 years before in that village, but there was no trace of his homestead then. During the investigation a middle-aged woman was found who claimed to be a grand-daughter of the deceased's daughter.

Encouraged by the success of the first day's sitting, they began forming circles regularly 3 or 4 times a week. Many high Indian officials were anxious to witness these wonderful phenomena, but as the Europeans did not countenance dabbling in spiritualism or occult science, they did not venture to join the circle openly.

II

One evening the late Raja Baroda Kanta Roy of Chanchra (Jessore) came to see the 'circle' secretly. The seance was held at the Jessore Normal School

that day. A Brahmin lad of 6 years was put in a trance and was under the control of some discarnate spirit. When the Raja arrived, the lad was unconscious and his eyes were closed. In response to the Raja's question the medium's hand wrote the name of the spirit who was in possession of his body. It was the name of one who was very much attached to the Raja and who had died 10 or 11 years back. The following conversation then ensued :

Q.—If you are really the person you represent to be, then tell me the conversation you had with me just before your death.

A.—I told you that I would appear before you after death. I made several attempts but you could not see me.

Q.—(Surprised.) Well, could you tell me what is on the stair leading to my bed-room upstairs?

A.—A portrait.

Q.—Whose portrait?

A.—How can I say? The portrait was not there when I was alive.

Q.—The name is written under the portrait. You can read and tell me.

A.—Ni—la—ka. The light is very dim there which makes it difficult to read.

Q.—You are right, it is the portrait of Raja Nil Kanta.

III

In another day's seance the name of the controlling spirit was written as Iswar Chandra Gupta Majumdar.

Then followed the appended interrogations and answers :

Q.—Are you the great poet Iswar Chandra Gupta?

A.—Yes, I am the same person. Majumdar was my title.¹

Q.—How are you?

A.—Not very well.

Q.—Why not? Have you got any particular trouble?

A.—No, nothing particular; but since leaving the earth I have been wandering from place to place.

Q.—Will you kindly write some poetry?

A.—All right, let me try.

Immediately the medium's hand started moving at a furious speed and 13 lines of a poem were dashed off in a second. At this time it was noticed that the medium's hand was bleeding in 2 or 3 places by coming in contact with the sharp edge of the tin-bound slate on which he was writing. He was then totally unconscious, and his hand was devoid of sensation. For fear of further injury he was then disentranced.

It was ascertained afterwards that the remaining 11 lines of the poem were written by the hand of another medium in a circle which was then sitting 16 miles away. The completed poem of 24 lines was of exquisite beauty and diction and was quite on a par with the other poems of the famous poet. Even the blind admirers of Poet Gupta freely admitted that the poem obtained through automatic writing had a striking similarity with Iswar Chandra Gupta's other writings.

IV

On another day spirits of Raj Krishna's eldest and second brothers appeared simultaneously in the 'circle'. Raj Krishna wrote thus about this seance in his book:

"By the way they gave proofs of their identity, I had not the slightest doubt of their being the spirits

¹ It was ascertained on enquiry afterwards that "Majumdar" was really his title and he always used to sign his name with this addition.

of my departed brothers. Although they remained for a short time on that occasion, yet it was the happiest day of my life. After that, both of them, particularly the younger one, appeared several times and gave me much good advice. Since that day a new life has been infused into my decayed body, and darkness and doubt have been dispelled by the bright rays of the sun of knowledge and the turmoil of uncertainty and doubt replaced by the still waters of perennial joy."

V

One day the medium's relations, out of fear of the Europeans, kept him confined in a room to prevent him from joining the 'circle'. The other sitters apprized of the fact beforehand, decided to form the circle without him and closed the door from inside, so that no outsider might get in and disturb them. Shortly after the proceedings had commenced, some one dashed against the closed door, broke it open and sat in the 'circle'. In the obscurity of the room they could not at first discover who he was but taking out the light from under the table, they found that the trespasser was no other than their own medium.

Even after the termination of the seance, the medium was found to be in a state of unconsciousness and the pupils of his eyes turned upwards. His body was so benumbed, that even the application of fire or the prick of a needle failed to produce any sensation. Afterwards, with great difficulty he was restored to his normal condition. It was then ascertained that when the seance had commenced, the medium fell into a trance in the room in which he had been confined and in that state he forced open the door and, after running helter-skelter over fields and dales, broke into the seance-room and joined the 'circle'. That he did so only under some super-normal influence admits of no doubt.

VI

During the first year the spirits, who manifested themselves, belonged to the lower planes, and it was evident from their talks that they were far from being happy. In the beginning of the second year a soft glow coming through the chinks of the door in which all the articles in the room were dimly visible, ushered the presence of a higher spirit; the sitters becoming simultaneously conscious of a feeling of restfulness. The facial features of the medium, ordinarily ugly, mellowed and his eyes and face shone with a soft delicate light. The medium was then still and senseless, his face was smiling and his eyes were looking heavenwards. The art of playing on a musical instrument was quite unknown to him, but in his trance state he executed with his hands one of the most difficult measures (Chautal) on the table keeping time with his feet, every now and then shouting "Oh what joy, how lovely!"

The discarnate entity was then asked his name and he replied in a couplet that he would not disclose his identity that day. Again he shouted "How splendid, how lovely!" and went on playing on the table. Then followed more questions and answers as below :

Q.—How are you keeping?

A.—I never did any wrong while on earth so I am leading such a happy life here (in verse). Again "How splendid, how lovely!" and the playing on the table.

Q.—How should a man worship God?

A.—With love, reverence and devotion (in verse)
—Again the same exclamations and the same playing.

Similar questions and answers continued for an hour, the answer being given invariably in appropriate verse. He ended with a long discourse on

virtue and vice, and on Heaven and Hell, of which the following is the substance :

“The soul is ignorant of everything at the time of its birth. Knowledge grows with the growth of the body. Constant progress is its lot; we cannot say how long it takes a soul to attain perfect knowledge and become omniscient. Deeds done with imperfect knowledge are sins. Sinful deeds have their origin either in a faulty structure of the brain or defective education, or evil association. It is not, however, true that sinful man will be doomed to eternal perdition. No fair and just person can expect perfect results from an imperfect body. I cannot, therefore, admit that the All-merciful Father is not fair and just. If a child does anything wrong out of ignorance, a wise father, instead of punishing it, tries to remove its ignorance, and I cannot by any means admit that our All-knowing Father is not wise. A man who puts obstacles in the way of the upward progress of the soul and tries to drag it downwards, is more guilty than a murderer.

He ended by saying, “Go on sitting in your circles’ like this, day after day. I shall come here occasionally and give you instructions and advice. May God bless you !” And he departed, and simultaneously with his departure the unusual light in the room vanished.

After being disentranced, the medium said. “Shortly after sitting in the circle, I saw a tall bright figure entering the room. I then fell into trance-sleep, I know nothing more.”

VII

One day immediately after the seance had started, the medium’s hand began to tremble. A

pencil being put into his hand, he wrote the name of a highly-placed official. Raj Krishna asked :

Q.—Where was your home?

A.—In town.

Q.—Is anyone of your family living now?

A.—Yes, my old mother and my wife (names given).

Q.—Did you ever meet me in life?

A.—Do you want to test me? Your brother Nabin is with me here. Four years before my death, in the big hall of your Baraset house, I asked you certain questions on Geography and you answered them. I still remember them. (He then gave the questions and answers).

With reference to this Raj Krishna has written thus : "This happened 25 or 26 years ago, and no one else but I knew anything about it. He was an intimate friend of my second brother, Nabin, so intimate, that for 2 or 3 years they were constant companions,—eating, sleeping and walking together. Whenever he met me he used to make me sit by his side and chaff me. I did not, therefore, have the least doubt about his existence and identity."

Q.—When your soul was detached from your body, what did you feel like?

A.—I saw my body lying as I stood a little above it in my astral counterpart. I felt astounded, and saw the doctor and some other people turning me over and shaking their heads. At this time two discarnate spirits came there and took me away. I was semi-conscious and I have not the least idea, where and by what route they carried me, nor how long I was in that dazed condition. Gradually consciousness returned and the two spirits, who brought me over, constantly gave me advice and instruction. I used to love my wife dearly and I had a great affection for my eldest daughter, so I naturally enquired

about them first. Drawn by an irresistible bond of affection I gradually discovered their whereabouts and frequently went to them. Under the direction of the two high souls I succeeded in turning my wife's



SISIR KUMAR GHOSH.

(Photo taken at the age of 40).

mind towards religion. The result was that she began to spend my money in pious and beneficent works and in the same measure the scales from my eyes went dropping off. Two years after your brother Nabin's arrival here, we have again been leading the same old happy life.

CHAPTER XV

STUDY OF SPIRITUALISM IN CALCUTTA

It cannot be definitely ascertained when and by whom the study of spiritualism was first started in Calcutta. Peary Chand Mitter has written that among the earliest exponents of the science was Raja Digambar Mitter. Babu Raj Narain Bose said in one of his articles: "Raja Digambar Mitter was a



RAJA DIGAMBAR MITTER.

Died on 29-4-79 at the age of 62.

spiritualist; spiritualism was his religion. Such was his firm faith in spiritualism, that he used to say that

in the future world, he would dine with his friends exactly as he did here, but of course, on ethereal food. Once when one of his grandsons providentially escaped after a fall from the top of his house, he said that it was the departed father of the boy, Girish Chandra, who saved his life."

The late Keshub Chandra Sen was also a student of spiritualism. He used to say that the study of this subject was a help to driving away superstition. It is also known that while in America he visited Mr. Burns (the Editor of the Medium and Day-break) and some other well-known spiritualists there.

Spiritualist Peary Chand Mitter

Among our countrymen, although there were a few who like Raja Digambar Mitter believed in the continued existence of soul, Babu Peary Chand Mitter was almost certainly the first man who made spiritualism a special subject of investigation and study.

About this time spiritualism was in great vogue in America and Europe. Quite a number of books dealing with the subject had been published, and discussions were carried on through newspapers as well. Being the Librarian of the Bengal Library of Calcutta at the time he had glanced through some of these books, but after his bereavements he made a special study of them with a view to knowing all about the future life of his departed wife who died in 1860.

In the preface of his book "On the Soul" Babu Peary Chand Mitter writes :

"My love for God became stronger by the afflictions I met with from time to time. In the year 1860 I lost my wife, which convulsed me much. I took to the study of spiritualism which, I confess, I would not have thought of otherwise or relished its

charms. I wrote for instruction to Judge W. Edmonds in May 1861. His kind and instructive reply will be found in my "Stray Thoughts on Spiritualism."



PEARY CHAND MITTER.

Died on 23-1-83 at the age of 69.

Doctor Berigny came to Calcutta subsequently (1863), and we had weekly seances at his house. At one of the seances, I was developed as a medium. From 1860 I have been deeply engaged in spiritual studies and spiritual contemplation. Having been for four years under spiritual influence, I now find that *yoga* and spiritualism aim at the same end—the gradual extinction of the carnal or impressional life."

From May 1861, Peary Chand carried on correspondence with Judge W. Edmonds, James

Barnes, J. J. Morse, Mrs. Emma H. Brittain and some other famous spiritualists.

In 1863 Dr. Berigny, a French Homœopath, came to Calcutta from Australia and started practice. He is said to be the pioneer Homœopath of the town. He was well-versed in spiritualism also. Many educated Bengalis of that time who came in contact with him began to study the subject. It was in his house that Peary Chand and others started holding seances.

It appears from Peary Chand's writings that they used to form circles here regularly and the first signs of his mediumistic power were manifested in one of the circles. After studying various standard works on the subject and from personal experience, he came to the conclusion that practice of *yoga* and spiritualism both lead to the same result, namely the destruction of the animal propensities in man.

Dr. Raj Krishna Mitter has recorded in his book "Shoka Bejoy" that after the development of Peary Chand's mediumistic powers, his departed wife was constantly present near him looking after his comforts and protecting him from all harm. Peary Chand had also developed sufficient clairvoyant powers to see his wife with closed eyes. At that time he used to hold seances in his own house, and gradually his sons and their wives developed into mediums. In this home-circle many discarnate spirits, both of family members and outsiders, manifested their presence.

Before Raj Krishna shifted his residence to Calcutta in 1869, he had obtained lessons in homœopathy and spiritualism from Dr. Berigny. By the time he settled in Calcutta he had attained sufficient proficiency in homœopathy to enable him to earn his livelihood by his practice, and he joined the Society formed by Peary Chand and others for esoteric culture.

Mr. J. G. Meugens, Manager of Messrs. Moran & Co., of Calcutta, was also a spiritualist. His

office was situated at No. 3, Church Lane. With the extension of Dr. Berigny's practice he could not make time to join the seances regularly, so the office of the Society was transferred to Mr. Meugens' house, where the study of spiritualism and the holding of seances continued.

CHAPTER XVI

SPIRITUALIST SOCIETY IN CALCUTTA

For the systematic study and investigation of spiritualism in Calcutta, a society was formed on the 30th May, 1880, with the designation of "United Association of Spiritualists". Mr. J. G. Meugens was its first President, Mr. Narendra Nath Sen its Secretary, and a few educated Bengali Hindus its members. His arduous duties as Editor of the "Indian Mirror" and as an attorney of the Calcutta High Court did not leave much time for any other work, and so Narendra Nath had to resign his office in favour of another attorney, Mr. Purna Chandra Mukherjee.

The study of spiritualism commenced in Dr. Berigny's house in 1863, but it is not definitely known when the meeting place was shifted to the office of Mr. Meugens. But so far is certain that the members of this group carried on the study of the subject systematically for 17 years, i.e., up to May, 1880, and also held seances regularly. Those who developed mediumistic powers during this period could give a certain amount of information about life after death by means of automatic writing and trance speaking, but it was not sufficient or convincing enough to satisfy the curiosity of the members. Accordingly Mr. Meugens despatched a telegram to one of his friends in London for sending over a reliable medium to Calcutta. As a matter of fact, one

such medium agreed to undertake the journey, but unfortunately the arrangements fell through in the long run.



NARENDRA NATH SEN.

After taking over the office of Secretary of the Association, Purna Chandra Mukherjee arranged for the meetings and seances to be held at his garden-house at Belgatchia, in the suburbs of Calcutta.

Medium Nitto Niranjana Ghose

Just about the time when they had practically given up all hopes of success, Dr. Raj Krishna Mitter

one of the members, brought one of his relatives to the seance. He was a young man, named Nitto Niranjan Ghose. He was found to be a fit vehicle for spirit influence, and later on he developed into a good medium.

Nitto Niranjan Ghose, an inhabitant of Baraset, district 24-Perganas, was possessed by an evil spirit. One day at midnight he suddenly left home, shouting —“I am coming,” and went straight to the burning ghaut. Another night he came to the garden of Dr. Raj Krishna and stood neck-deep in the water of a tank. He kept on doing like this for some time. His people thought it high time he was placed under a doctor, so he was sent over to Dr. Raj Krishna in Calcutta for treatment.

As soon as he arrived Raj Krishna mesmerised a glass of water and asked him to fix his gaze on it. Within a short time he saw two little hands in it which gradually became bigger and bigger and showed signs of excitement. Frightened at the vision he threw away the tumbler and ran out of the house. When he was caught by 4 or 5 men and brought in, it was found that his whole body was inert and hard as iron, eyes closed with pupils thrown up, and jaws locked. His jaws were then unlocked, and mumbling a few inarticulate sounds, he cried out, “Why are you trying to drive me away?”

Asked about his identity he replied that his name was Bholanath Mukherjee and his home was in the district of Jessore. Thirty years ago when he was carrying Rs. 5,000/- along a road, four or five men fell upon him with a poisoned spear and killed him. No one knows anything about it. But they could not remove the booty. It still lies buried in a wall. The spirit, however, refused to give the names of the murderers.

The following day, i.e., on Sunday, the 5th June, 1881, Raj Krishna took Nitto Niranjan to the garden-house at Belgatchia, to which a reference has already been made. There were present the Hon'ble Bruce of America, Mr. Meugens, Peary Chand and 15 or 16 others. A circle was formed immediately with the new comer as one of the sitters. Shortly after Nitto Niranjan was found to be under the influence of an evil spirit. He at once left the circle, ran away with lightening speed and was soon out of sight. All the other sitters broke the circle forthwith and rushed towards the gate to intercept the run-away, if possible.

According to the advice of the Hon'ble Bruce, Raj Krishna shouted out a determined command to the invisible Nitto to remain still on the spot where he then was. Messengers were then sent out all around to look for him. One of them returned and reported that some way down the road the run-away was found executing a polka and climbing up and down a date-palm tree like a monkey. An up-country man, who tried to grapple him, was given such a violent push with his left hand that he was flung 2 or 3 cubits away.

On hearing this Raj Krishna hastened to the spot and touched him, following the advice of the Hon'ble Bruce. It acted like a charm; he stood still for a moment and then followed Raj Krishna like a lamb to the garden. He was then laid on the sitting room and mesmeric passes were administered to him several times. After remaining quiet for a short while the spirit disclosed his identity through him. It appeared from his statement that he had been an extremely wicked person while on earth and had never uttered the name of God. The result was that immediately after his death he became an evil and earth-bound spirit, and had ever since been leading a miserable existence in a banian tree by the side of the Barrackpore Trunk Road. On that day, how-

ever, he got some relief and peace of mind on hearing some hymns sung in the circle.

About this time Mr. Alexander Calder, President of the British Association of Spiritualists of England, arrived in Calcutta. He joined the next two circles of the Calcutta Spiritualists' Association, namely, on the 12th and 19th June. The presence and sympathy of Mr. Calder and the Hon'ble Bruce made all the four seances in June very successful.

II

The seance of the 12th June was held in the Belgatchia garden-house at 4-30 p.m. There were present Messrs. Calder, Meugens, Peary Chand Mitter, Purna Chandra Mukherjee, Dwijendra Nath Tagore, R. Mitter, Bar-at-law, Surjo Kumar Mukherjee, Satya Churan Chatterjee and Nitto Niranjana Ghose. The last two were mediums. About twenty minutes after the sitting had commenced, both the mediums passed into a state of trance, the former being influenced to write and the latter to speak. Nitto Niranjana was in deep trance. He was addressed by Messrs. Meugens and Peary Chand in English, but the answer was in Bengali. The sum and substance of the answers was that his name was Madhusudan Mitter, he was Peary Chand's brother, that he was very unhappy, and that he was anxious to speak to Peary Chand in private.

On hearing this, all others, except the medium and Peary Chand, left the room. On their return after 8 or 10 minutes, Peary Chand told them that he had received ample proofs of identity and that he was satisfied that the spirit was no other than that of his brother. The spirit had requested him to pray for his welfare.

After the departure of this spirit, another took possession of Nitto's body. He gave his name as Surat Chander Mitter. About a year ago he had died

of consumption in the house of his near relative, Cally Churn Ghose, a Deputy Magistrate, of Mirzapore Street, Calcutta. He was a bachelor. Proceeding with his story he said: "I am quite happy here. I have no other occupation except singing hymns to God and worshipping Him. There is no caste or colour distinction here. At first I was frightened at seeing all my near relatives, who had come before me, but now I am quite happy in their company. Everything is pleasant and blissful where I live. I have come here to-day to console my old father and mother, who are beside themselves with grief at my loss. As you do not know them, I had to give the name of my relative, Cally Churn Ghose."

It may be as well to note here that none of those present at the seance could recognize Surat, but Dr. Raj Krishna Mitter, who had now come in, knew all about Surat and confirmed the truth of all that Surat had said. Surat was actually under his treatment during his illness.

III

At the sitting of the 19th June, Nitto Niranjana Ghose got under the influence of another spirit who gave his name as Debendra Nath Tarkaratna. The following communication was received from him:

"I was an inhabitant of Barrackpore and died 6 years and 3 months ago. Two other spirits are here. One is a Brahmin, and the other a female. The former is going out, being unwilling to remain here. His name is Bholanath Mookerjee. He is no fit company for you. The female spirit is a Brahmin's daughter. Her name is Annapurna Devi. I am very pleased that you are going on in this way. You will be gradually delighted. I am coming from an enchanting region. Our work is to worship the Great Power; and who can remain unmoved at the thought of His mercy? We are meditating on Him and worshipping

Him. We are constantly thinking of the blissful Father, we are absorbed in Him. I am in the third sphere, but now I am coming from the second. When I was eighteen years old, I went to Lucknow for employment. I made the acquaintance of a *Sannyasi*, from whom I learnt *Yoga*. From that time I ceased to take any interest in worldly affairs. I made considerable progress. After sometime the *sannyasi* told me that he could not teach me more and asked me to seek out some other teacher. He then disappeared. I then came to Vindhychal and lived there for sixteen years. Afterwards, I came to Tinpahari, where I met three *sannyasis*, with whom I lived for sometime very happily. One day at midnight I died, and the *sannyasis* placing my body in a hollow covered it with stone. While dying I saw my *Guru* (spiritual guide), who had taught me *yoga* at Lucknow, seated near my head. He said: "Fear not, I will take you to a region where there is no covetousness, no sin." I cannot describe the felicity I enjoyed in the spirit-land.

I found there no relatives, but the spirits who had offered me a seat, said, "Son, be seated. What you were after on earth you will realise here. You gave up everything to know God, and you will gain that knowledge here, which you could not have acquired by travelling all over the world." I cannot describe the happiness I experienced. My *Guru* took me to another place which was still more charming, where rivers flow with nectar, and trees are laden with luscious fruits. We can get whatever we wish, but we do not desire to have anything earthly. We do not require any fruits for food. The nectar of devotion which flows in us is enough. I wish to go now as the medium will not be able to stand longer. I pray for your progress. Devote yourself to God. You shall have my assistance, and I will come next Sunday."

IV

At the sitting of the 26th June, Mr. Meugens proceeded to mesmerise Nitto. Shortly after he began, Nitto screamed in fright and cried, "There, look at the mirror, two *yogis* are standing within it," and fell senseless on the table. He was then laid on a bed, and a little while after he told the following strange story in automatic writing :

"My name is Ganga Govinda Mukherjee. Dacca is my native place but my parents lived in Benares, where I was born. I was not married. When I was 18 years old, first my father and then, three weeks after, my mother died, and I was left all alone in the world with no one to look after me. Without my parents the whole world was a blank. I had no desire to live and I went about wandering aimlessly in the jungles.

One day while I was without food and weeping, I came across a Sadhu (a saintly ascetic), seated by the side of a large pile of blazing fire. Filled with a spirit of great reverence I approached him and stayed the whole night with him, he remaining wrapt in meditation. In the morning when he opened his eyes, he was surprised to find me. Without speaking a word, he left the place and penetrated into the jungle, but I would not leave him and followed him from place to place for a number of days.

At last he was pleased with my perseverance. He kept me with him for 12 years and imparted all his knowledge to me. After this, he asked me to remain where I was and pursue my devotional exercises, and then left. I lost all trace of him completely. I stayed there for a few years more and then went to Vindhachal. Shortly after that I left my mortal frame and came here 22 years ago, when I was 85 years of age.

After coming to the spirit-world, I came across many people whom I had never seen before and I

accompanied them to an unknown place where I saw many pure and high souls, who had led pious lives in this world. I met a very high luminous spirit. He was full of love. It was the sixth plane or heaven where only pure souls inhabit. He asked me to stay there and continue in my devotions. I acted according to his advice and was enraptured with delight at the exquisitely beautiful things I saw all around me. The intensity of my pleasure is beyond description. I have a disciple with me here. He came here last Sunday. His name is Debendra Nath Tarkaratna. He learnt *yoga* from me."

Under the influence of the lower spirits in the beginning Nitto used to become very restless with pain, but when higher spirits appeared his pain gradually decreased. He could then talk and write at ease. The more he developed his powers the higher became the order of the spirits that manifested in him. Nitto was neither an intelligent nor an educated person, but the advice and instruction which came from him, while under trance, left no room for doubt as to their origin, that is, they did not emanate from his subliminal self but from higher discarnate entities.

Bholanath Mukherjee

The sole cause of the gradual and steady progress of Nitto Niranjana was the spirit of Bholanath Mukherjee. The first time Nitto Niranjana came under Bholanath's influence his spirit was in the *Preta Loka*, the first halting stage of a spirit in its upward journey, where it has to pass sometime in great pain, and naturally Nitto Niranjana was in great physical pain all the time he was under its control, the spirit itself suffering from pain. But every time the spirit appeared in the circle it got an opportunity of coming in contact with higher spirits and of hearing

hymns sung in praise of God, thus improving its own condition. Along with its improvement it began to experience joy and peace of mind, consequently the medium also felt less and less pain. Constant association with Nitto developed in it a fatherly affection for him, and gradually it took upon itself the task of protecting Nitto's body from the influence of evil spirits.

Along with the improvement, Bholanath's spirit evinced a desire for doing good to others. About this time Nitto Niranjan had been suffering from a chronic pain in the stomach, which baffled all medical aid. Bholanath's spirit cured him by mesmeric passes. Concluding the record of this incident in his book "Shoka Bejoy", Dr. Raj Krishna says: "Six or seven of us were present when this was done and I have described exactly what happened before our eyes." A few more incidents showing the spirit's capacity for healing by mesmeric passes have been recorded in the same book, but the exact process as to how the passes were given is not mentioned in it. The incident of a spirit curing Mahatma Sisir Kumar of cholera through the agency of his brother Moti Lal has been recorded in the "Hindu Spiritual Magazine" and also quoted in this book before.

We quote another incident from "Shoka Bejoy": On the 10th and 11th of August, 1881, seances were held in the houses of Mr. C. C. Dutt, Bar-at-law, of Ram Bagan, Calcutta, and of Dr. Raj Krishna. Nitto was present at both these seances. On both occasions the medium was troubled by evil spirits, but Bholanath's spirit succeeded in driving them away.

Bholanath's spirit had made such immense progress and its desire to do good to others was so strong that Dr. Raj Krishna actually dedicated his book "Shoka Bejoy" to it. He wrote thus in the dedication: "To the feet of the revered discarnate spirit, of the late Bholanath Mukherjee: Sir, I am

greatly indebted to you. Owing to the great interest you took in our worldly affairs and your disinterested efforts, many spirits of a high order were induced to grace our circles with their presence and heal many members of our family of painful maladies on many occasions. Regarding the other world, we have learnt many things about death and of life after death from their advice and instructions. We have also learnt that you are devoting your present life in relieving the distress of others. I am sure you will derive great pleasure if a single devoted widow or a grief-stricken mother gets some consolation or mitigation of her sorrow by reading the contents of this book. It is for this reason that I am dedicating this book to you with your permission."

Medium Satto Churan Chatterjee

Another young man, equally amiable, aged about twenty years, developed as a writing medium in a trance state. The name of this medium is Satto Churan Chatterjee. He was influenced by his wife, Panna Devi, who died at the age of fifteen. She was an intelligent and pious lady and was fond of studying religious books. She used to come to her husband whenever he wished and spoke through him on different subjects. In the present seance she communicated a long message in Bengali touching the re-marriage of her husband. Amongst other matters she said :

"I am happy here. There is no care or anxiety. Those, who sin, are taught here by the spirits of the virtuous and are gradually elevated."

She then announced that she was going to make room for a high spirit, who was about to make an important communication. This spirit communicated the following message :

“My name is Narayandas Chatterjee. I am coming from the fifth sphere. I take a great deal of friendly interest in the medium. I am the eldest brother of his grand-father. I knew Peary Chand Babu. I died 15 years ago. I practised yoga. Your progress is sure. We are drinking continually the nectar of wisdom and love. Friends, in our land, which is free from disease, grief and anxiety, pain is unknown. Our sole occupation is to drink the name of the Almighty. Brethren, do not make the work in which you are engaged your amusement, but be absorbed in the contemplation of the Great Power. With a single mind fix your attention on Him. Brethren, there are many, who take to this sacred work for show, which bears no fruit, and no show is at all necessary.” Then, in Hindi he added: “If mere daily ablutions could give us knowledge of God, then would every marine animal know Him. If divine knowledge were dependent on mere fruit diet, then would God be known by bats and monkeys. If vegetable food were a necessary element of the same knowledge, then would God manifest himself to deer and kine. If mere abstinence from sexual commerce could help us to know God, then would eunuchs know Him. God, says Mihir, is not known save by men of piety.”

He then recited a Sanskrit *sloka* (verse) from ‘Meghaduta’, a translation of which is as follows :

“The hearts of females, though soft and tender as flowers, and apt to break at the separation from the objects of their love, are often found to withstand (grief) when hope inspires them.”

“Therefore, brethren,” said the spirit, “there is no necessity of any outward show, for if you fix your mind on Him, you do not require anything else. Men do not think of God unless they fall into adversity, and while in adversity, they are only anxious about getting over their troubles; even then they do not desire to be united to God. In this world,

men do not purify their minds out of their own accord. They are always deluded by false hopes. In the minds of men, there is desire of wealth and desire for greatness; but they are never absorbed in God. Be not, therefore, deluded by such fallacious desires. In this world do not desire anything, but desire that you may be happy after death. There is no necessity for happiness in this world. Happiness in the next world is the real happiness. Men are blinded by desire, which is the cause of misery. Brethren, men are full of false hopes. Happiness in this world is transitory, for which do not sacrifice your eternal happiness. Live in this world free from greed and desire. The heart, which is free from greed and desire, is a noble heart. Men do not realise the love of the infinite God for being addicted to the pleasures of this world, which do them no good. Sons, do not sacrifice the infinite happiness for the transitory happiness of the world."

Messrs. J. G. Meugens, Peary Chand Mitter and Purna Chundra Mookerjee were present at the seances at which the above communications were made. They remarked: "We have not the slightest doubt as to their genuineness. Both the mediums are of ordinary culture. Nitto is thoroughly guileless. Satto does not know Hindi and Sanskrit which he quoted. It is gratifying to us that we are receiving communications from high spirits, and that spiritualism is progressing in this city."

CHAPTER XVII

W. EGLINTON—THE FAMOUS MEDIUM

Of all the famous mediums in America and Europe of those days, Mr. Eglinton was supposed to be the best and most reliable. He acquired a world-wide reputation as a psychical and materialising medium. At the instance of a few keen spiritualists of Calcutta, he came to our city in the middle of November, 1881. He put up with Col. Gordon and Mrs. Gordon at Howrah, and remained there up to the end of April, 1882. While in Calcutta, Mr. Eglinton gave demonstrations of his wonderful super-normal powers in the houses of some European and Indian gentlemen. The accounts of some of them were published in the "Indian Mirror" and the "Psychic Notes" of that time.

The Psychic Notes

The "Psychic Notes" was a fortnightly periodical published by W. Newman & Co., Ltd., of 4, Dalhousie Square, Calcutta, for four months from January to April, 1882. Col. Gordon was its gifted editor. Both he and his wife were keen spiritualists. The prime object of publishing this journal, only for four months, was to publish the wonderful manifestations of Mr. W. Eglinton. Both Col. and Mrs. Gordon published several articles supporting spiritualism in the "Psychic Notes." It ought to be mentioned here that Mr. Eglinton did not come out to exhibit his powers to the outside public, but only to a selected few of the higher and more intelligent classes upon whom no impostures could possibly be palmed off.

Of the many super-normal phenomena he exhibited, the following are worth mentioning: Spirit writing on slate, on white paper and blank card, materialisa-

tion of spirits, levitation (*i.e.*, floating in air), apport (*i.e.*, passing through solid substance), and conveying of letters between London and Calcutta in a moment. Some of the specific instances are quoted below from the "Psychic Notes :"

I

On Sunday, the 20th Nov., 1881, a seance was held at Col. Gordon's house at Howrah. There were present, besides the host and hostess, Mr. Meugens, Mr. Eglinton, and four other gentlemen well-known in Calcutta. A room 18 feet square—off the drawing-room—was cleared of furniture, with the exception of two almirahts and a dressing table. Eight chairs were arranged for the sitters, and a table on which was placed a large musical box weighing about 20 lbs., a smaller one, a zither harp, a bell, a fan, a candle and holder, and a box of matches. The room was in the upper storey and had no verandah to it. The doors were barred and the windows were fastened. Attention was called to this and also to the almirahts being empty before the sitters took seats. Having done this and taken hands, the candle was blown out. The medium, at his own request, had been seated between two of the strangers, who never let go his hands. After some trifling movements of articles on the table, and the opening and shutting the lid of the large musical box, raps were heard on the table, gaining in strength as they went on, the musical boxes were wound up and began playing. The "intelligence" at work was asked to stop the music; this was done instantaneously, and as often as suggested the music was started and stopped. A fan was opened, a small bell was rung, and all the articles on the table were moved about in a rough way. The large musical box was placed, while playing, on the heads of some of the new sitters. Some small things were brought from the dressing table, and one was placed in the hand of the host to whom it belonged. Except in this instance,

no notice was taken of the three sitters, who had long since learnt the truth of these phenomena, all the powers being used for the men who were inquiring. The best manifestation was when the zither harp floated above the heads of the sitters and "Home Sweet Home" was played on it; the listeners then heard the go-off into the distance, apparently into the drawing-room. By attentive listening only could it be heard, and then the sound came gradually nearer until just outside the drawing-room door, as far as we could judge, when, with a sudden plunge, it was in the room again, and the harp was then put in a noisy way on the top of the almirah. The door was barred and there was a strong light in the drawing-room, so it could not have been opened without the sitters' knowledge. The cold wind, which is generally felt at the beginning of a seance, was distinctly noticed and commented on, and materialized hands were felt by several. One gentleman's chair was pulled from under him, but he held it firmly with his leg, and would not let it be taken away. He felt a powerful hand grasp his shoulder, and a thin attenuated one, later on, was roaming about over his chest, the motive of which, we discovered when in the drawing-room afterwards, was to conceal a key taken from the large musical box, which we found locked when we lit the candle. The medium was taken up and the gentlemen holding him had to stand up, and reach out their arms. He was floating horizontally as his feet touched the shoulder of one of the sitters two seats off. As the manifestations were very violent, and there was evidently an equivalent for the power expended taken from the medium, we judged from his heavy breathing that it would be well to break up. So the candle was lighted. Doors, windows, and almirahs were again examined, and the eight sitters were the only persons in the room.

Those readers, to whom these phenomena are new, will do well to reflect on the difficulties attending

the fraud theory when applied to the above manifestations. (1) The seance was held in a gentleman's house, so all pre-arrangements by the medium was impossible. (2) The sitters were all well-known to each other, the medium being the only stranger. (3) He was held all the time by two of the sitters, who were sceptics. The suggestion of fraud on this occasion would have been more ridiculous than anything spiritualists have ever been credited with either saying or believing. The credulity, which outsiders show when, in the face of such evidence, they accept the pretended exposures of conjurors as explanation of the phenomena of spiritualism, proves, that it is not the absence of credulousness nor the presence of fair scepticism, but a defect in the reasoning faculty, which causes them to accept these.

II

The second seance at Col. Gordon's house was a failure, no manifestations occurring. Three of the inquirers present at the former seance were also present at this, and two new ones. The same gentlemen held the medium as on the former occasion. These failures happen sometimes when all the sitters are spiritualists, as we do not yet understand the condition necessary to insure manifestations, but it may be known some day, and in the meantime we have to wait for them. It has taken a long while to perfect the electric light, with many heads and hands at work, so it is nothing surprising if still more occult forces are at present beyond our control. When the same sitters are holding the medium, and so far, therefore, the conditions are the same, even a failure proves something, for if the manifestations were the result of clever conjuring, why should they ever fail?

III

On the 18th January, 1882, a successful seance was held. There were five inquirers present, four of

whom were at the former one. The medium was held on this occasion by two sitters, who had not witnessed manifestations, one of these has since had a seance at his own house and is perfectly satisfied with the genuineness of these phenomena. As there is always a great similarity in the occurrences at dark seances, it would be needless repetition to go into details, the chief difference between this seance and the first being, that a gong, hung high up towards the ceiling, was struck with the stick end of the mallet, and a kind of accompaniment to the musical box played. The person, who tied up the gong, stood on the table and reached at arms length to do it. As the medium was sitting on a chair at the table and held by both hands, the idea that he could have struck the gong himself presents some difficulties.

On this occasion a voice was heard which addressed the hostess. This voice is a very peculiar one, well-known to most spiritualists in London. The host and hostess and one other person present had heard it there, always with other mediums. It was recognised at once when on a previous occasion in Calcutta it addressed Mrs. Gordon by name, and she then mentioned the circumstance of this same spirit having often spoken at her house in London. People talk of ventriloquism, and imagine this explains the voices so often heard at seances. But there are few ventriloquists, and many mediums, and, if any one will call to mind the few persons so gifted he has met during the course of his life, he will realize how unlikely is the theory that this peculiar gift has suddenly become so common. Then it is said that there is no such thing as ventriloquism in the dark, that is to say, you cannot be deceived as to where the voice comes from when only the ear is called into requisition. The ventriloquist attracts the eye, and assists the imagination by his dialogue, and thus conveys the idea he wishes to, as to where the voice proceeds from. Now as the voices heard at seances often come from direc-

tions where the medium's head could not be—and this has been verified by the writer many times—unless it is proved that a man can send his voice to a distance as a ventriloquist is supposed to do, the popular theory is here again assuming an impossibility. The attempted explanations of those, who know nothing of the facts, show an amount of stupid credulity and positive inability to reason which are as astounding as the phenomena themselves. If these intelligent explainers of what they have never seen and of which they can have read little, were able to appreciate the evidence put before them they would at least look for theories less absurd, for they might with show of reason say we all tell lies, seeing they have doubtless met some people who do tell them, or they could suggest a general hallucination of all the sitters, electro-biology giving some plausibility to such a theory; but when they pretend to believe that a man held by both hands, can wind up a musical box, make it gyrate round the room and rest high on the heads of the sitters, besides doing twenty other things, which cannot be done without hands, they prove themselves either unable to comprehend the evidence or willing to accept any explanation other than the true one.

IV

At a seance held at Mr. Meugens' house, on Tuesday, the 29th November, 1881, the extraordinary manifestation of writing upon a blank card between the leaves of a book was reproduced.

Ten persons were present, of whom three, Mr. Eglington, Mr. Meugens and Mr. Doggett, were spiritualists; two, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Cheetham, advanced inquirers, and the five others simply investigators.

After sitting for a longer period than usual, without results of any kind, the medium passed some blank cards round for all to examine and see that there was no writing of any kind upon them. One card was

then placed upon a musical box, which had been put upon the table, round which all were sitting. A pencil was placed at the side and the light extinguished. On relighting, the card was still found blank.

The medium handed the card to Mr. Doggett to examine, and Mrs. Cheetham, who sat next to him, saw clearly, as he turned it over to examine it closely, that both sides were quite free from writing. A jagged corner was torn off the card and given to Mr. Doggett to keep for identification, and the card was then, immediately and in the full light, placed within the leaves of a book, and a morsel of pencil was also laid on the same page. The book was laid successively under the hands of Mrs. Cheetham and Mr. Doggett, one of the investigators, and of Mr. Cheetham without result, for, on opening the book, each time the card was still found blank. Finally, under the hands of another investigator, a faint ticking was heard inside the book and, after waiting a few moments, the medium took another blank card, laid it in another book with a scrap of pencil and placed it under the hands of the investigator with whom he had, in the first instance, been unsuccessful. The left hand of the medium rested on the one book and his right on the other over the hands of the two investigators. After a very short time the first book was opened and the following words were found distinctly written on the card :

"Spiritualism fully understood must be the means whereby you shall derive true consolation and comfort and a thorough understanding of the divine will. Since I have been in spirit-life I fully perceive the errors one is likely to make by refusal to seek into new truth. Truth which is always strange—stranger than fiction. And I praise God that in my ascended—"

Here the first card ended and the conclusion of the message was found on the other card, under the hands of the other investigator, as follows :

"state, my knowledge of a glorious immortality has been proved. Then hasten ye who scoff, and enter and find true solace and freedom from doubt, which an uncertain future has for you. Your friend, John Williams."

From the time of placing the first card in the book to the end of the manifestation, all was in full light, and when the jagged end was tried upon the card, it fitted perfectly.

Other manifestations followed, but they were of greater interest to the sitters than to the general public.

V

Babu Peary Chand Mitter held several seances with Mr. Eglinton. One of the reports of such seances, written by him, was published in the "Indian Mirror" in its issue of the 29th December, 1881. In this letter Babu Peary Chand wrote :

"It is very well-known that I have been a spiritualist since the death of my wife. My eldest son, Amrita Lal, who has had communications with several departed members of our family, was desirous of witnessing some manifestations through the mediumistic powers of Mr. Eglinton. Accompanied by my son, I visited him at about 11-30 A.M. on Tuesday last. He, on seeing my son, at once said that he was a medium. Mr. Eglinton kindly offered to give us a seance, and he, myself and my son formed a circle at 12 o'clock in broad daylight. Mr. Eglinton was in no sense in trance-state. I had brought with me a clear slate which he held under the table, his thumb being on the top, and his fingers pressing the slate against the under-surface of the slate. Mr. Eglinton and my son sat opposite to each other, and I sat next to Mr. Eglinton. The following questions were put, the answers being written on the slate while Mr. Eglinton held it in the position described above. After each question was answered, the slate was washed, and the writing obliterated.

Amrita Lal's Questions

Q.—Whether I am a medium?

A.—You are a medium.

Q.—Why I cannot communicate with the spirits, as Mr. Eglinton does?

A.—You are not developed.

Q.—Whether the communications I had with the spirits of my mother, wife and grand-mother were real or the hallucinations of my brain?

A.—Yes they are real.

Q.—Are my mother, brothers, sisters and wife in the room?

A.—Yes.

Q.—Whether my mother can give us a message?

The following communication was then given in answer :

“My dear husband,—This will be written for you by one of the guides of Mr. Eglinton, but it is nevertheless from me. I am so glad to be able to communicate in this material manner, and assure you by actual demonstration of my presence. Your father, Ram Narain, comes with me, and together we hope we left your philosophic mind to the realms of light and truth. Keep on in your noble disinterested work and your reward in the next life is very sure.

Assuring you of my presence at all times, I am ever, with much dear love—Your wife. (Counter-signed) Pran Krishna.”¹

Q.—Whether my brothers are in this room?

A.—Your brothers are with you.

Q.—Is my wife in the same sphere with my mother?

A.—No.

¹ Pran Krishna was of Khanda father-in-law of Peary Chand Mitter

Q.—Is my mother in the fifth or any other sphere?

A.—Yes, fifth sphere.

Q.—Where is my wife?

A.—She is in the fourth sphere.

A mundane question was asked which the spirits declined to answer. In all cases the sound of the writing was heard distinctly by me and my son. Mr. Eglinton's fingers only held a slate or two slates, with a little bit of pencil, one above the other. When the *Q.* 6 was asked, two slates, which we so carefully sponged, were put on the table with a little bit of pencil, and which we both touched. We both felt and heard the writing.

VI

Mr. Eglinton held some seances at the residence of Babu Dino Nath Mullick, of Parsi Bagan, Calcutta. In one of these seances, among other super-natural phenomena, the materialised form of an Indian lady appeared, whose face was partially visible; and a gentleman, who was a sitter, solemnly assured the party that he distinctly recognised her as his mother. But these things were done in darkness. Still it is impossible to doubt that they were done in absolute good faith, and without the 'east help from accomplices.

Then Mr. Eglinton, in the clear lamp light demonstrated blank-card phenomena exactly as was performed at Mr. Meugens' house on the 29th Nov. 1881.

VII

Mr. Eglinton held a seance again with the same sitters as on the last occasion, at the house of Babu Dino Nath Mullick. In the opinion of those,

who were present in that seance, it was even more successful than the last. One of the sitters had, it appeared, for sometime been missing some valuable documents; and one of Mr. Eglinton's spirit-guides, "Daisy," who, we are told, was the spirit of a Red Indian girl, was summoned, not in material form but in spirit, and being questioned as to what had become of these documents, told the querist where they were to be found. No search had yet been made by the sitter; but it was very likely, in his opinion, that they would be found in the place indicated. Two materialised spirits also appeared—one of a Hindu lady and the other of a Hindu gentleman; and on this occasion not in the dark but in the light of a lamp, though the light was not brilliant. They were the father and mother respectively of two of the gentlemen present. The figures, though distinctively visible as of a Hindu lady and a Hindu gentleman, were not quite recognisable yet in their spirit form. We hope they will be so on a future occasion. But the most noticeable features of the last seance were the following :

One of the sitters was requested to write the name of one of his departed relatives. The name written was not at all shown to Mr. Eglinton, nor did he know it, or was likely to have known it before. The bit of paper, on which the name was written, was then folded up and handed over to Mr. Eglinton who, as soon as he received it in that state, burnt it in the flame of the lamp before which he sat. It was immediately reduced to ashes and Mr. Eglinton then rubbed the ashes over one of his arms, which had been laid bare, and found to be quite clear and free from any writing at all. But scarcely had Mr. Eglinton rubbed the ashes over his arm when the name of the departed relative of the writer appeared in distinctly legible characters over the very arm spelt exactly as on the bit of paper itself. But the most striking thing was this. When the materialised

spirit had disappeared, a distinct sound as of writing was heard in the dark for two or three seconds only, and immediately, when a light was brought in, a card was found stuck up on the edge of a book, near a certain distinguished sitter, and the following Sanskrit text appeared on it, in pencil, in pure and excellent Bengali handwriting, with the initial in English of one 'P': "Tapasa Brahma Vijind-sitavgam," which, when rendered into English, runs as follows: "By devotion and knowledge of God, a person is united with Him, i.e., he attains salvation."

We may well look forward to still more startling glimpses into the spirit-world through the agency of Mr. Eglinton's certainly most extraordinary powers. No man, who has witnessed his seances, can possibly doubt the genuineness of his manifestation. The most important of these events was the transmission of a few letters from London to Calcutta and back by the spirit-guide of Mr. Eglinton within a few hours. The fact is testified to by no other personage than the late Mr. J. G. Meugens, who received a letter in Calcutta at eleven on the night of the 20th November, 1881, written by one of his best friends, whose peculiar handwriting was perfectly well-known to him, on a subject about which this particular friend could only write, at seven of the same evening; the details of this and other events are reproduced in the Appendix.

The Famous Magician Harry Kellar

At the time medium Eglinton was publicly demonstrating the wonderful psychical phenomena in Calcutta, a famous magician, named Harry Kellar, was busy in earning public applause by performing amazing feats and sleights of hand and incidentally confirming the ideas of sceptics, who had little faith in super-normal phenomena.

Harry Kellar addressed a letter to the "Indian Daily News" regarding the doings of Eglinton, which

appeared in that paper on the 13th January, 1882. The following is the letter :

I have followed with much interest the correspondence in your columns regarding the spiritualists, and more particularly the accounts of manifestations said to have taken place in the presence of a gentleman, now on a visit to India, in the capacity of a medium. I am far from wishing to sneer or throw discredit on what is said to have taken place and what has only reached me on hearsay. At the same time I should be glad of an opportunity of participating in a seance, with a view of giving an unbiassed opinion as to whether, in my capacity of a professional prestidigitateur, I can give a natural explanation of effects said to be produced by spiritual aid. I trust that my character as a man is a sufficient guarantee that I would take no unfair advantage, or violate any of the conditions imposed on a seance to which I were invited.

After the publication of the above letter those, who had no faith in the existence of life after death or in the survival of soul, were exulted with joy. They were under the impression that the opposite party, i.e., the spiritualists, would be completely subdued and would not attempt to make any refutation. At that time the Editor of the "Indian Herald" very gravely assured its readers that Mr. Kellar, the famous conjuror, now in Calcutta, can produce all the phenomena, which the spiritualists attribute to the agency of the departed souls of the human race. But they were disappointed, for Harry Kellar published the following letter in the 'I. D. News,' on 25-1-'82, making a complete *volte-face* :

Sir,—In your issue of the 13th January I stated that I should be glad of an opportunity of participating in a seance, with a view of giving an unbiassed opinion, as to whether, in my capacity of a professional prestidigitateur, I could give a natural explanation of effects said to be produced by spiritual aid. I am indebted to the courtesy of Mr. Eglinton, the spiritualistic medium, now in Calcutta, and of his host, Mr. J. Meugens, for affording me the opportunity, I craved. It is needless to say I went as a sceptic, but I must own that I have come away utterly unable to explain, by any natural means, the

phenomena that I witnessed on Tuesday evening. I will give a brief description of what took place.

I was seated in a brilliantly lighted room with Mr. Eglinton and Mr. Meugens. We took our place round a common teakwood table, and after a few minutes the table began to sway violently backwards and forwards, and I heard noises such as might be produced by some one thumping under the table. I tried to discover the cause of this movement, but was unable to do so. After this Mr. Eglinton produced two common school slates, which I sponged, cleaned, and rubbed dry with a towel myself. Mr. Eglinton then handed me a box containing small crumbs of slate pencil. I selected one of these, and, in accordance with Mr. Eglinton's directions, placed it on the surface of one of the slates, placing the other slate over it. I then firmly grasped the two slates at one of the corners, Mr. Eglinton then held the other corner, our two free hands being clasped together. The slates were then lowered below the edge of the table, but remained in full view, (the room remaining lighted all the time). Instantaneously I heard a scratching noise, as might be produced by writing on a slate. In about 15 seconds I heard 3 distinct knocks on the slate, and I then opened them and found the following writing :

"My name is Geary. Don't you remember me, we used to talk of this matter at the St. George's. I know better now."

Having read the above, I remarked that I knew no one by the name of Geary. We then placed our hands on the table, and Mr. Eglinton commenced repeating the alphabet until he came to the letter G when the table began to shake violently. This process was repeated till the name of Geary was spelt.

After this Mr. Eglinton took a piece of paper and a pencil, and with a convulsive movement difficult to describe, he wrote very indistinctly the following words :

"I am Alfred Geary of the Lantern ; you know me and St. Ledger."

Having read this, I suddenly remembered having met both Mr. Geary and Mr. St. Ledger at Cape Town, South Africa, about four years ago, and the St. George's Hotel is the one I lived at there. Mr. Geary was the Editor of the "Cape Lantern." I believe he died some three years ago. Mr. St. Ledger was the Editor of the 'Cape Times', and I believe he is so still. Without going into details, I may mention that subsequently a number of other

messages were written on the slates, which I was allowed to clean each time before they were used

After describing several successful experiments, Mr. Kellar proceeds :

In respect to the above manifestations, I can only say that I do not expect my account of them to gain general credence. Forty-eight hours before I should not have believed any one, who described such manifestations under similar circumstances. I still remain a sceptic as regards spiritualism, but I repeat my inability to explain or account for what must have been an intelligent force, that produced the writing on the slate, which, if my senses are to be relied on, was in no way the result of trickery or sleight of hand.

On the 30th of the same month Mr. Kellar addressed another letter to the 'Indian Daily News,' reporting some experiences of another kind with Mr. Eglington, and regarding which he said :

In conclusion, let me state that after a most careful scrutiny of these wonderful experiences I can arrive at no other conclusion than that there was no trace of trickery in any form, nor was there in the room any mechanism or machinery by which could be produced the phenomena which had taken place. The ordinary mode by which Maskelyne and other conjurers imitate levitation or the floating test could not possibly be done in the room in which we were assembled.

CHAPTER XVII

SPIRITUALIST DR. PEEBLES

Dr. J. M. Peebles, M.A., M.D., Ph.D., of America, was a renowned physician and vastly learned in spiritualism. He travelled round the world five times for a close study and investigation of spiritualism, and published a book entitled, "Five Journeys Around the World," containing a full account of his travels. There are many things worth knowing in it.

He wrote that he visited India on all the five occasions, but we have information of only two visits to Calcutta, the first being in 1873, when Peary Chand Mitter and others used to hold seances in the office of Mr. Meugens.

No reference has been made in his book to his activities during that visit to Calcutta, excepting a bare mention of his meeting with some spiritualists and his discussions with them on the subject. On returning home he delivered a lecture at the Spiritual Institute on the 30th September, of that year. In it he said :

“On reaching India we met Keshab Chandra Sen, whom Mr. Burns, the Editor of the “Medium and Day-break” and probably others of you met a few



KESHAB CHANDRA SEN

years since in this city when he came here and when I, for the first time, became acquainted with him. He favours spiritualism because of its liberalising influences.”

About Peary Chand Mitter he wrote :

“Readers of the ‘Banner of Light’ remember to have heard me speak of receiving letters from Peary Chand Mitter, a spiritualist. It can well be imagined that it gave me much pleasure to clasp the hand of this Hindu thinker, author and spiritualist; and the more so when I found the soul deeply absorbed in spirituality. His Brahmanical tinge permeating his spiritualism had for me a thousand charms. He was for a time a writing medium; but at present his gift pertains more to spiritual insight. He assured me that his ascended wife was as consciously present, at times, as though in her body.

“While conversing with P. C. Mitter, a gentleman came in and was introduced to us. His name was Shib Chandra Deb. He was a devoted spiritualist. He presented us a neat volume in Bengali, that he had recently published upon spiritualism. It contains liberal extracts from American authors; in fact, the works of Davis, Tittle, Sargent, Denton, Edmonds, and others are well-known in India. This gentleman also translated a large portion of my book ‘Seers of the Ages’ into Bengali language; and they are now being circulated as tracts in India.

“Expressing regrets that I had not a copy of the ‘Seers’ to tender him in return for his valuable volume, he said smiling, “I had read the Seers of the Ages, and others of your later works, quite a number of which have reached our country from Mr. Burn’s publishing house in London.”

We have ascertained on enquiry that Shib Chandra Deb’s home was in Konnagar, a village a few miles to the north-west of Calcutta. His third daughter was married to the second son of Peary Chand. After the sudden death of Shib Chandra’s second daughter, her spirit manifested before Peary Chand and said: “Please go to Konnagar at once. My mother has been greatly afflicted at my death.”

On this he immediately proceeded to Konnagar and sat in a seance with Shib Chandra and his wife. Shib Chandra's wife was quickly entranced and wrote the following in automatic writing: "Mother, I have



Fig. 1. Automatic writing.

given me a lot of trouble, so please forgive me. After passing through many tribulations I am now at rest and am happy." After writing a few more sentences in like strain, she was released from the spirit-influence and started weeping and lamenting over her daughter's death. Peary Chand comforted her with these words: "Your daughter was suffer-

ing great pain in this world, but she is now happy and contented. You should not, therefore, grieve for her, for if you do you will rob her of her peace." From that day onwards Mrs. Deb was greatly relieved of her misery.

Dr. Peebles has recorded in his book: "While in Calcutta, Mohendra Lal Paul and Roma Nath Sen—two interesting young men connected with the higher castes—called upon us several times to converse on spiritual phenomena in America, and the best methods of holding private seances. Conversant with the spiritualistic literature of England through the mails, these young men are spiritualists, and yet they have never witnessed a shred of the phenomena."

The Hindu Spiritual Magazine

Mahatma Sisir Kumar Ghosh was the founder-editor of the "Hindu Spiritual Magazine." It was a monthly periodical and the first number was issued in March 1906. "The object of the Magazine," writes the Mahatma, "is to disseminate spiritual truths known in the East. The Theosophists have done much to carry out this idea, but there is yet work for others. The other object of the 'Magazine' is to show that death, which is the lot of all and which is considered to be the greatest calamity that can befall man, is, in fact, the greatest of God's blessings to His creatures."

In this connection, Maharajah Bahadur Sir Jotindra Mohan Tagore, K.C.S.I., the then foremost citizen of Calcutta and a man of vast erudition, culture and experience with many other qualities of head and heart, wrote a letter to Mahatma Sisir Kumar, which will prove how the latter was competent to undertake the task of editing such a Magazine. The following is the letter:

"My dear Sisir Babu,—I have read with great interest, the cutting you have enclosed. I should,

indeed, be only too glad to have the opportunity of expressing myself what I think of the all-important work about to be set on foot, and about the unquestionably competent hand who is to undertake the same.

“The Hindu Spiritual Magazine will certainly meet a want that has long been sadly felt, and will, I am sure, be hailed with joy by every one who feels a craving for occult knowledge and spiritual research. I can hardly think of any other Hindu gentleman so well qualified as yourself to edit a magazine of the kind. Knowing you, as I do, to be a man of exceptional intelligence and a highly cultured man, with rare originality of conceptions which belong to a man of genius, as also with what energy and earnestness you have devoted your life to the study and dissemination of spiritual knowledge, I have every reason to hope that your project will be attended with success. True it is that you are widely known as a political character; that is by reason of your long connection with the ‘Amrita Bazar Patrika,’ but the author of so many religious works, breathing deeply of devotional feelings and high spirituality, should be even more widely known in connection with spiritual culture.

The importance of such a magazine can never be over-estimated; it has been very aptly said by that great statesman, Gladstone, that psychical research is the greatest and most important subject that can engage the attention of man. I know too with what energy and singleness of purpose you work when you take a matter in hand. Moreover, the work of the proposed ‘Magazine’ will be a labour of love with you, into which you are sure to put your whole heart; and with the stock of your personal experiences in the psychic line, the magazine will not fail to command all the elements of success. Besides, such a periodical, the only one of its kind in our country, will be a suitable vehicle to convey to the public, in a collected form, the researches and experiences of others who are given to labour in the field of psychic researches.”

The Magazine was sent to Dr. Peebles regularly from the beginning. He expressed his satisfaction and appreciation in a letter written to Sisir Kumar. After that there was regular correspondence between the two great men.

On the 14th September, 1906, he addressed the following letter to Mahatma Sisir Kumar :

My dear Brother,—Your last "Hindu Spiritual Magazine" reached me safely by the Oriental Mail. It is the best number upon the whole that you have yet issued, and its contents are interesting, instructive and very valuable. I read it with a great degree of pleasure.

I take the liberty of sending you an article or rather extracts from a lengthy lecture that I delivered at one of our great American camp-meetings on a Sunday. I suppose there were nearly 2000 people present. The meeting begins with charming surrounding scenery.

I have not yet given up the idea of coming to India this autumn. My heart and soul often go to that land of Aryans, land of Vedas, and those magnificent poems that taught a future immortal existence ; and that further taught that happiness could be obtained in the world only through obedience to law, and the aspiration to be good and pure, and spiritually-minded.

Very cordially yours,
(Sd.) J. M. PEEBLES, M.D.

Battle Creek
Mich, Sept. 14.

P. S. As signs and tokens now indicate, I shall reach India in December. I sail from London in about two weeks."

Dr. Peebles's Last Visit to Calcutta

Dr. Peebles, however, came to Calcutta on the 4th January, 1907, that is, 14 years after his previous visit recorded above. Mahatma Sisir Kumar arranged for his stay at the "Tagore Castle" for two months as the guest of Maharaja Bahadur Sir Jatindra Mohan Tagore. A meeting was convened for his

reception in the spacious hall of the 'Castle' which was attended by more than three hundred educated Bengalis and a few Englishmen and Parsis. Dr. Peebles delivered a lengthy address on Spiritualism. "Owing to indisposition the Maharaja Bahadur could not be present, but his able son, Mahā Prodyot Kumar, occupied the presidential chair instead and introduced Dr. Peebles to the assembled gentlemen in a neat little speech. In an article written by Dr. Peebles to the "Hindu Spiritual Magazine" he wrote thus with reference to this meeting :

"It was this regal-souled toiler for the truth and religious liberty, Babu Sisir Kumar, who, while on my fifth journey around the world as the world missionary in the interest of spiritualism, secured my room in the castle of the Maharaja Jatindra Mohan Tagore, a Knight Commander of the Order of the Star of India. This Maharaja and Babu Sisir Kumar were close intimate friends and this friendship was the secret of the Maharaja opening the splendid hall of his palace for the delivery of my first lecture in India upon spiritualism. On this occasion, the Maharaja at his own expense issued 300 invitations to the literate of Calcutta, among whom were several editors, government officials and Rajas. Seldom during a public life of seventy years, did I ever address a more intellectual and cultured audience. It must not be forgotten that thousands of Hindus, after graduating from Indian colleges and universities, proceed to Paris, Berlin, London and America to pursue their further studies."

Dr. Peebles and the Maharaja Bahadur

Dr. Peebles in his book "Five Journeys Around the World" wrote :

The Maharaja Bahadur was really a Hindu of the Aryan type. And while true to Vedic Hinduism, he was nevertheless an occultist and a well-informed spiritualist,

relating to me by the hour in his palace most remarkable spiritual phenomena that he had personally witnessed by adepts and Yogees. And he referred me to a book in his Castle library containing astounding spiritual manifestations, among which were illumined apparitions and the burying of hypnotized subjects, resurrect them,



MAHARAJA BAHADUR
SIR JATINDRA MOHAN TAGORE, K.C.S.I.
Died on 10-1-1908 at the age of 77.

end of the specified hour, weeks and months hence—a process not unlike hibernation. In the fourth storey of

his castle was one of the rarest and choicest libraries that I have ever been privileged to enjoy. During our two months in his castle, we visited him for a time in his palace, treating him two or three times a week magnetically. He was suffering from over-work, inducing neurasthenia and insomnia. He has since passed onward to higher life on January 10, 1908, at the age of 77 years.

The Calcutta Psychical Society

The inaugural meeting of the "Calcutta Psychical Society," founded by Mahatma Sisir Kumar, was held in the spacious hall of the Maharaja Bahadur's palace on the 11th February, 1907, at 4-30 P.M. under the presidency of Dr. Peebles. The designation of the Society was unanimously adopted at the meeting, and the following persons were elected to form the first Executive Committee :

Patron—Maharaja Bahadur Sir Jotindra Mohan Tagore.

President—Dr. J. M. Peebles.

Vice-Presidents—Sri Lal Sisir Kumar Ghosh and Mr. J. G. Meugens.

Secretaries—Srijut Piyush Kanti Ghosh and Mr. C. C. Armitage.

Treasurer—Mr. W. J. Mumford.

Members—Mr. W. J. Carroll, Dr. Monnier, Sj. Narendra Nath Sen, Sj. Moti Lal Ghosh, Mr. J. Mukherjee, Sj. Joy Chandra Chowdhury, Dr. Hem Chandra Sen, Mr. G. Dubern, and Sj. Premtosh Bose

Dr. Peebles has written to say that after taking leave of the Maharaja Bahadur he accepted the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Armitage, the latter was an excellent inspirational medium, endowed with superior spiritual gifts. At this time she was sitting for materializations of free spirits.

Mahatma Sisir Kumar was the mainstay of the Calcutta Psychical Society and the "Hindu Spiritual



PIYUSH KANTI GHOSH
Died on 22-10-29 at the age of 55.

Magazine," and through his efforts the importance of both grew in scope and extent. But unfortunately he fell ill before long, and on January 10, 1911, he left this world for his eternal home.

In both these works Sisir Kumar's eldest son, Piyush Kanti, was his right-hand man, who, after his father's death, edited the Magazine very efficiently for a few years with the help of his uncle, Moti Lal. Nihar Kanti, the fourth son of Mahatma Sisir Kumar also used to help his elder brother then. The work of the Society was, however, stopped for a few years after Mahatma Sisir Kumar's death until revived by Piyush Kanti in 1918 with the help of Saroj Kumar Chaudhuri. But owing to his multifarious duties as a public man Piyush Kanti could not devote the necessary time to the Society's work, and it remained in a moribund condition until his death in 1929. It was again revived in March 1932 through the efforts of Sj. Saroj Kumar Chaudhuri and Dr. Sarasi Lal Sarkar who assumed the offices of Joint Secretaries. The present Secretaries are Sjs. Sukumar Sen Gupta and Saroj Kumar Chaudhuri, and the Society is carrying on its work fairly well.

Dr. Peebles and Mahatma Sisir Kumar

During his last visit to India Dr. Peebles spent more than two months in Calcutta when an intimate and lasting friendship grew up between him and Sisir Kumar as the result of close association in their frequent discussions on various subjects. After Sisir Kumar's transition to a higher sphere, Dr. Peebles wrote an article in the "Hindu Spiritual Magazine" in commemoration of his sacred memory, a portion of which is reproduced below :

"Upon receiving the 'Hindu Spiritual Magazine' of January, opening its pages and looking upon the face of my highly-esteemed friend and honoured co-

worker in that blessed movement which demonstrates a future conscious and progressive existence beyond the grave, I was astonished. The fact shocked me. Meditating in the silence for the moment, I said, is it possible that that brain and those hands that for very many years wrought so wisely and so well, are chilled and stilled into the pale grimness of mortality? It was all too true. There on the first page is pictured the kind, conscientious and intellectual face of the reformer and friend of humanity; and on the next page was the cold untenanted temple, symbolized by the moveless chrysalis from which had emerged the beautiful butterfly, winging its way from flower to flower in the entrancing sunbeams of spring time.

Life and death, like the rising and the falling of the sea-tide, are each in their time equally desirable. Before we can have the vigorous blade and the ripened wheat in harvest-time, the external kernel must die in the damp earth. This is evolution's rigid process; and so, before we, as human-beings, can be clothed in vestures immortal, the material, which is the temporary vehicle of the divine *Atman*—the conscious spirit—must, by the inexorable law of nature, return to mother-earth or what is infinitely superior, be returned to ashes through incineration. Christians bury their dead and so poison the soil with decaying forms and disease-inducing gases. There is no more unhealthy place in the vicinity of a city than a cemetery of the dead.

Annihilation is unthinkable. There is no death to the innermost immortal spirit; and dying is simply severing the trusted chain that binds the conscious ego to the fleshly casket; or it may be compared to the rose and the climbing vine which climb along and up the garden wall, blooming unfadingly on the other side.

Babu Sisir Kumar Ghosh was no ordinary personality. He was not only an upright and conscientious man, not only a broad-minded thinker



NIHAR KANTI GHOSH
Died on 31-1-28 at the age of 38.

and reformer, but he was, in every sense of the term a saint—a saint whose soul was afire with devotion to India,—politically and religiously, and in a wider sense to the whole world of humanity—symbolized: We are Brothers all. Before meeting Babu Sisir Kumar, I knew literally nothing of the wonderful life and spiritual manifestations of that great and grandly inspired Bengali, Shri Gouranga. Babu Sisir Kumar, though a Hindu of Hindus, was, in the best acceptance of the word, a devoted spiritualist—a spiritualist in every way the opposite of the materialist who, floundering along in the dark, believes that death ends all.

Never can I forget to the end of mortal life my close social communion, a blending of America and India, with the lamented originator and editor of the *Hindu Spiritual Magazine*. He was a thinker, a scholar and a brilliant torch of intellectual progress. He was also an affectionate, unassuming man, and yet, really great; for all true greatness is based upon goodness, intelligence and consecration of the benefit of all tribes, races and nations. When meeting this saintly man for the last time, he affectionately threw his arms around my neck, saying in tones as tender as angel's: "You are far along in years, dear Doctor, and my health is quite poor; we may never meet again in the flesh, but we shall meet and know each other in that Better World of Immortality. Your coming to us has done a vast amount of good to our Beloved Cause—We bless you." My eyes were filled with tears; for I love my friends and pure unselfish friendship is as abiding as the stars.

While no words of solace can bridge the magnetic chasm of temporary separation of voice and familiar step in the home, yet we know that consciousness, memory and love are as enduring hereafter as the suns in the heavens. The veil of immortality separates partially for a season, separates to make the re-union all the more enchanting. May

the sweetest benedictions of heaven rest upon him in his new and higher life and upon his excellent family to whom he was and still is so devotedly attached.

Having in a measure the gift of clairsentience, I felt—I knew that a dear friend in the orient had crossed the crystal river termed death and I remarked it over and over again to my friends. A few days later, Mr. Sundall, my excellent assistant, who is quite a clairvoyant, dropped his hands from the typewriter and said, “There is a Hindu spirit in the library, who knew you in India.”

“Who is it?” I inquired.

Mr. Sundall replied, “I do not know, as I never saw this spirit before.” Intuitively and spiritually, I felt assured of who it was and a dark shadow of sorrow settled down upon me. This clairvoyant then said: “Other distinguished Hindus are now here in the library with the one attracted to you and they want you to gather and organize a party of speakers, clairvoyants, and physical mediums to traverse the whole land of India in the interests of spiritualism. The country is now ripe for the investigation and acceptance of spiritualism, which comforts the mourner, destroys the fear of death and demonstrates eternal progress.”

Our reply to these Indian intelligences was in substance that the finances would be difficult to secure and then, in a few weeks, I shall have passed my 89th year and have commenced my march onward to the ninetieth milestone, looking hopefully to the century mark, for the continuance of my work.

It gives me very great pleasure to know that the “Hindu Spiritual Magazine” will continue to send the good tidings of a demonstrated future life to the world, under the management of the brother and cultured son of its late editor. My heartfelt prayer is that the gods above and the friends on earth below, may long continue to give them health, social assistance

and finances, with many years to continue their good work,—a work that the immortals of the heavens must admire, bless and glorify.

J. M. PEEBLES, M.D.

519, Fayelle St.,
Los Angeles, Cal., U.S.A.

Dr. Peebles, in his book "Five Journeys Around the World" published portraits of only two Indians, viz., of Maharaja Bahadur Sir Jotindra Mohan Tagore, and Mahatma Sisir Kumar Ghosh. This photo of Sisir Kumar was taken when he was 40 years of age. Both these portraits have been reproduced in this book.

Golap Lal Ghosh

Uncle Golap Lal and myself were about the same age. We were very much attached to each other and spent seventy-two long years together in mutual love and affection through weal and woe, hope and despair, happiness and sorrow. But he at last left us for his eternal home on the 28th of September 1932 at the age of 73.

Spiritualism, as I have already said, was studied and cultivated in our family from our childhood. In our younger days, I remember very distinctly, we saw sittings of our family circles. Whenever the spirits of our beloved relatives descended and regaled the circle with their sweet familiar voice, we simply danced with joy. We felt absolutely certain that they lived in some dreamland and came down to see us every now and then.

As we grew older in years and experience we joined the circles ourselves. Then only we could see many supernatural things and phenomena with our own eyes. The ideas of our childhood were now

completely changed; what in those days, we thought to be dreamland, we learnt now to be sober reality only with this little difference that though real it was always beyond the ken of our material perceptions.



GOLAP LAL GHOSH.

Uncle Golap Lal was a keen spiritualist and, like other members of our family, was also a firm believer in the existence of a life beyond and a re-union over there. As post and telegraph help us to obtain news of our dear relatives and friends living far away from us, so do the seances and circles now-a-days secure all informations about the departed souls. As communication with people living in distant places is possible through telephone which is one of the latest wonders

of science, so it is possible to carry on conversation with departed souls and even to hear their own voice through a medium. Even by shutting our eyes we can see their etherial forms clairvoyantly, that is by means of our finer and clearer sight. Truly speaking, therefore, we have got hardly any valid reason for mourning over our dead relatives and friends.

When at the demise of her beloved son Hira Lal my grandmother was about to sacrifice her own life in the paroxysm of her grief, she was told that it was possible to communicate with the dead. Not only did this knowledge save her from premature self-immolation, but a few days after, while sitting in a circle, she, by the grace of God, actually got all informations about her departed son. From that day forward, having carried on conversation with her son, heard his voice and received ample evidence of his affection and regard for her, she came to forget all her sorrows and looked forward eagerly to the time of her daily communion with him in the evening.

Since the departure of uncle Hira Lal several of our relatives have followed him to the other world. But, again, through the grace of God, we have been able to considerably minimise the measure of our grief by getting into touch with their spirits through our family circles. Whenever in the fullness of our heart we sang hymns to our Lord, the spirits of our departed relatives came down from their eternal abode and joined us in our hymns. Not only did we feel their presence but we also actually saw them clairvoyantly. Besides them, the spirit of Hari Das and other spirits of higher order were occasionally attracted to our seances, and joining us in our devotional songs moved us to the highest ecstasy.

A few years back one day moved by bereavement, when we were engaged in singing Kirtan songs to relieve our sorrow-laden soul, we saw clairvoyantly that our departed relations, drawn by the music, were dancing in joy. We caught the infection and could

not remain indifferent but joined them in our trance state, deriving a heavenly bliss thereby. When restored to our normal state, uncle Golap Lal remarked that the story of the descent of Lord Gouranga and his companions, after their disappearance from earth, in the house of Thakur Narottam during a festival and joining in the dance which we have read in our religious books, is not a figment of the brain, but a real fact.

We have seen that, to sin-bedimmed people like us, the death of a dear relative, though appears painful at first, is really a blessing in disguise. As gold becomes more and more refined and shining by the process of smelting, so does the human soul get more and more purified by passing through grief after grief. Out of evil cometh good, and therein lies the unbounded love and kindness of God. No prayer or supplication ennobles and purifies a soul so much as the crucible of sorrow.

CHAPTER XVIII

SOME RENOWNED MEDIUMS

Thakur Tarani Kanta

Thakur Tarani Kanta Chakravarty Saraswati is already a well-known person with the literary people of our country. At one time there was hardly a single man, beginning from Lord Carmichael, once the Governor of Bengal, to the ordinary man in the street of Dacca, who was not deeply impressed with the high occult powers of the Saraswati.

Reports of his miracles were published more than once in the Hindu Spiritual Magazine, the Amrita Bazar Patrika, and other newspapers of Calcutta and Dacca.

He gave demonstrations of his uncommon powers of hypnotism, thought-reading, clairvoyance, fire-walking and bringing down spirit-forms of deceased persons.

Sj. Tarani Kanta Chakravarty is a native of Dakshin Maisandi, in Dacca. He is a saintly character, with great supernatural powers. Every inhabitant of Dacca, many high European officials, including the Commissioner, Judges and Magistrates, were satisfied with his demonstrations of hypnotism, clairvoyance and bringing down of spirits to this world. Almost all the then European officials of Dacca including Mr. N. Bonhan Carter, I.C.S., Mr. A. Bentinck, I.C.S., Mr. J. W. Nelson, I.C.S., Mr. S. K. Sawday, I.C.S., spoke in high terms of Tarani Kanta's psychic power as displayed by thought-reading, walking over burning wood, hypnotism, and clairvoyance. The local European Police officials, including Messrs. Fairweather, Morris, Stein, Furze, Parsons, bore the same testimony to the Saraswati's superhuman powers.

The late Rai Bahadur Iswar Chandra Ghosh the then Govt. Pleader of Dacca, was a well-known gentleman and commanded universal respect. He took three wives in succession; but unfortunately they all died one after another, the last dying on the 16th July, 1911.

From this time the Rai Bahadur was very anxious to see for himself if there was any means by which he could open communication with his departed relations. He was very intimate with Thakur Tarani Kanta. On the 13th August, 1911, at his earnest request, the Thakur held a seance in Iswar Babu's house in broad daylight at 8 A.M. A table with three chairs round it was placed in the hall. Several people assembled there to witness this strange feat. They were advised to wait in the verandah outside the room, and inside sat the Thakur, Iswar Babu and a boy in

a circle, holding one another's hands; the boy was taken as the medium.

The Thakur at first muttered some indistinct prayers to the Almighty, then closed his eyes asking those present to close theirs also. After a few minutes, on opening their eyes, they saw the spirit-form of an oldman appear before them. Iswar Babu recognised it as that of his deceased father. But within half a minute the form disappeared and in its place appeared the spirit-form of a handsome young boy. Iswar Babu saw in it the very image of his deceased son, Trailokya Nath. This form also lasted for half a minute. After this, appeared simultaneously the spirit-forms of the three deceased wives of Iswar Babu. They were dressed in the same garments as they used to wear while living. The forms were seen as vividly as pictures in a cinema show. They remained for about three minutes. Then the spirit of the first wife disappeared, next that of the second and when the form of the third wife was about to disappear, Iswar Babu cried out very eagerly, "I have got something to ask of you." As soon he uttered the words, the spirit-form moved a little and disappeared in the body of the boy who was sitting in the circle. The boy became unconscious and his hands and feet were suddenly caught in a violent tremor. Then the Thakur placed a piece of paper before him and a pencil in his hand. The boy wrote very hurriedly the following three sentences :

- (1) Well. (2) *Sradh* and *Pinda*. (3) Not untimely.

After this, the boy regained his consciousness. Iswar Babu was greatly astonished to find the answers and said that he had the following three questions in his mind: (1) How my future life will be spent? (2) How can I render spiritual benefits to you? (3) Why did you die untimely? And he got very satisfactory answers to these.

We got the information in detail from Iswar Babu who was a great friend of ours. After describing the incidents, he wrote: "I am very glad to let you know that Thakur Tarani Kanta performed a wonderful feat in my house by bringing down the spirits of my father, son and three wives in broad daylight and having my queries answered by my third wife, though I did not utter them."

This is really a very wonderful feat and shows that the occultist possesses psychic powers of no ordinary character. As a rule, materialized spirits are produced in darkness or dimly-lighted rooms, but to produce them in broad daylight is a rare feat.

On enquiry we learnt from the Saraswati that he was not conversant with the modern occult methods of the west, but he exhibited such feats according to pure Indian methods.

It is a new thing undoubtedly in the western countries, but it is not so in our land. It is said in the Mahabharata that when at the death of Sukadeva, Vyasadeva was sorely stricken with grief, Sankara consoled him, assuming the form of Sukadeva. Not only did he show him the spirit-form of Sukadeva but also gave him valuable instructions on spiritualism. And Vyasadeva, in his turn, showed the different forms of the hundred sons of Gandhari, who were killed in the battle of Kurikshetra at the request of the grief-stricken mother. He, again, on another occasion, showed King Janamejaya the spirit of his deceased father Parikshit.

According to the Saraswati, abstraction of the mind from the outer to the inner world and single-minded devotion help a spiritual man to get this clear vision. Then he can know a great deal of the future and the after-world, and after attaining a certain degree of proficiency, can perform these wonders for a few minutes and make any one see the spirits of his deceased relatives with his inward eye.

He did not tell us how he acquired this power, but we can safely conjecture that he learnt it from some highly advanced spiritual men, for he has been leading a pure and noble life from his boyhood and has great confidence in his religious teachers. He had a natural tendency to medicine and spiritualism.

For eighteen years he has been living in Benares and many chiefs and nobles of that place have been deeply impressed with his wonderful spiritual powers, but the last five or six years he has abstained from all worldly affairs and spends most of his time in the worship of God. Now he is 58 years old. His photo which is published in this book, was taken in 1912 when his age was 36. Many of our readers might be interested to know his address; it is—Ananda Ashram, 4, Biswanath Lane, Benares.

Tarani Kanta's Fire-Walking

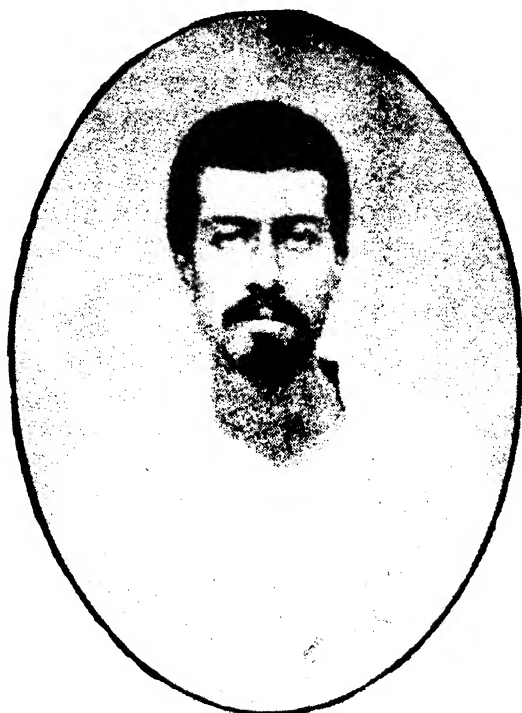
Fire-ordeal is a very ancient institution to be found in our mythological works as well as the history of the ancient Romans, Greeks, and Babylonians and it was long looked upon as an infalliable test for finding out the truth regarding a person's innocence or guilt.

In modern days fire-walking were exhibited by Mr. D. D. Home and Miss Suydam in 1880 in Chicago and London.

Such miraculous feats were also exhibited by Srimat Jangam Baba at Benares and Thakur Tarani Kanta Saraswati at Dacca. Of these two the feats of the Thakur seem to be more wonderful. Although he exhibited these wonderful feats several times, we publish below only two :

The first of these took place on the 12th April, 1909, in the compound of the Ukil Institution at Dacca, in the presence of many Indian and European gentlemen of education and position. The second exhibition was given in his own house at

Dukshin Maisandi on the 3rd July, 1909. The following account was published by Babu Pran Kumar Ghosh, M.A., Deputy Magistrate, in the Bengali monthly, the 'Bharati':



THAKUR TARANI KANTA.

“There assembled a large crowd to witness this great psychic event in Maisandi. At first a square of 8 cubits with half a cubit deep was dug out in the compound in which two maunds of fuel-wood were strewn and then fire applied to them.’ When the wood had caught fire the disciples began to arrange them in such a way that the fire might burn with equal strength on all sides. After an hour or so half the wood kindled and the square was ablaze.

The heat was so intense as to make one uncomfortable even at a distance of 9 or 10 cubits.

About this time the venerable Thakur appeared on the scene, barefooted and clad in silk, with a scarf of the same stuff on his shoulders. He stood for a short time with his face towards the fire, and then entered the blazing fire pronouncing some incantations. The flames covered him up to the waist and the spectators were struck with amazement at the wonderful sight and the whole place resounded with shouts of "Haribole". The Thakur crossed the fire four times from south to north and from north to south, again from west to east and from east to west and then came out of it by a side. After this his disciples touched his feet with their hand in reverence and crossed the fire one by one.

The feat was no doubt extremely wonderful, but there was a lurking suspicion in our mind that they must have had their bodies and clothes besmeared with some substance that neutralised the effect of the fire The Thakur addressing the spectators said: "If any of you wish to cross the sacred fire, then come along, leaving your shoes behind." When we (a friend of mine, myself and two other spectators) had advanced a little, the Thakur came up and touched our heads with his hand. At his touch we were conscious of a pleasant cooling sensation in our body and a comfortable feeling in our minds. We then stepped into fire and gently crossed it twice or thrice We were in the midst of a fire whose heat was unbearable even from a distance. Could it be that the burning power of the fire had been completely destroyed? One of my friends tested it. He had some scraps of paper in his pocket. One of these was thrown into the fire and instantly reduced to ashes. After this all doubts were entirely dispelled from our minds and we came out of the fire."

Hossien Khan

Mr. Stead is quite right when he says that, if one can be a true medium, there is no reason why he or she should not be a conjuror and a psychic at the same time. We had such a medium in Calcutta seventy years ago—the famous Hossien Khan, an up-country Mahomedan. His achievements were so wonderful that they could never have been believed to be true but for the testimony of thousands of reliable men of the highest position in our society. The late Maharaja Bahadur Sir Jotindra Mohan Tagore was one of his patrons. He tested him on several occasions, and witnessed some of the most wonderful feats of his occult powers.

In apport-producing phenomena Hossien Khan had perhaps very few equals. We heard the following story from the late Maharaja Bahadur. It was broad day light at about 3 P.M., when Hossien Khan suddenly appeared at his palatial residence at Pathuriaghata. The Maharaja had recently purchased a beautiful silver cup, which was lying on the table around which he and some of his friends sat. Hossein Khan took a fancy to the cup and begged the Maharaja to make a present of it to him. "Why shall I give it to you when I have bought it with my own money?" said the Maharaja with a twinkle in his eye. "Don't say nay, Raja Saheb, let me have it; and I shall be ever grateful to you for it," was Hossien's reply. "Very good," said the Maharaja, "I can part with it only on one condition, namely, that you take it away through the help of your 'Hazarat,' "—"Hazarat" being his alleged spirit-guide. Hossien Khan demurred, saying that the "Hazarat" was not always in a compliant mood, and that he was not at all sure if he (Hazarat) could comply with his request. The Maharaja asked him to try, and he agreed.

Then the cup was taken into another room which was separated from the parlour where the Maharaja sat

with his friends by a thick wall. It was then wrapped in a handkerchief and firmly held in the grasp of the strongest man in the company. Hossien Khan was now asked to spirit away the cup. He went out to the verandah, cast up his eyes towards the ceiling, and uplifting his two arms, with joined palms, he implored his "Hazarat" to bring the cup to him. He used some such words as these : "Hazarat be merciful ! do fetch the cup to me, I shall be very grateful to you." In a short time, which could not be more than five minutes, something seemed to fall into the hands of Hossien Khan, who at once caught hold of it, his face beaming with delight. It was in the presence of the Maharaja and his friends, and the cup was found to be the very identical cup which was in the hands of the gentleman in the next room. The latter could not explain how the cup slipped out of his hands and vanished from his firm grip. He was not at all conscious of its disappearance.

I shall publish below another wonderful, rather funny, feat. It was told us by our well-known neighbour, the late Mr. O. C. Dutt of Rambagan, in North Calcutta, the then Vice-Chairman of the Calcutta Municipality. A fruit-seller was crying oranges in the street, and he was called upstairs where Mr. Dutt and Hossien Khan were seated. The oranges, which were in a basket, were examined one by one by Hossien Khan. There was a difference about the price, Hossien Khan deliberately naming an absurdly low price, his object being to chafe the fruit-seller which was gained. The fruit-seller at once took fire, and observed with great impertinence that he, Hossien Khan, had perhaps never bought an orange in his life. Saying this, he left the place in a huff, muttering maledictions under his breath, as he went with the basket on his head. He had proceeded only a few steps and had almost reached the ground floor, when lo, his fruits began to leave his basket and fly up and vanish. In a few seconds the basket

was empty. And what did Mr. O. C. Dutt see? He saw oranges dropping on the lap of Hossien Khan by twos and threes.

The fruit-seller hastily came upstairs only to find all his fruits strewn around Hossien Khan. Now Hossien Khan's object was to amuse himself and his friend, Mr. Dutt, by the discomfiture of the fruit-seller. He had no great mind to buy the oranges; he had only called him to have some fun out of him. He deliberately named a very low price, so as to offend the fruit-seller and lead him to speak disrespectfully of him and then buy the oranges at their proper price. When the orange-seller came up, he saw Hossien Khan and Mr. Dutt, having a hearty laugh over his discomfiture. The poor man fell at the feet of the great magician and begged pardon for his impertinence and so the matter was amicably settled. Mr. Dutt had noted down the incident in his note-book at that time, from which he read out to us.

Hossien Khan performed hundred, even more, of such wonderful feats. But he gradually lost his remarkable powers, chiefly owing to his greed and drinking habits, and at last he took to trickery. On one occasion he was caught red-handed and charged with fraud before a criminal court of Benares. The Magistrate convicted and sentenced him to six months' rigorous imprisonment and he died in the Benares jail.

Medium Govinda

The name of the late Monoranjan Guha Thakurta, of Barisal, is known to many of the present generation. In the month of Asar of 1294 B.S., he published a book on spiritualism, named "Asha Pradeep" ("Lamp of Hope"). The second edition of the book was published on the 18th Chaitra, 1312

B.S. In this book Manoranjan Babu publishes some super-normal incidents performed by Govinda in his trance state. Some of the opinions expressed by a few distinguished and well-educated men, who had been eye-witnesses of the occurrences mentioned therein are reproduced below :

I

The renowned doctor Tarini Kumar Gupta, of Barisal, wrote on the 23rd Asar, 1294 B.S. : "The medium, Govinda, has been living with me in my house for the last 3 or 4 years. His home is near my home too. I do not believe that there was anything fraudulent or deceitful in the several wonderful phenomena that happened through his mediumship. I say this not by guess but after severe test. To ascertain if he was really unconscious, when he fell into trance, I inserted a knife into his arm in such a manner that afterwards I had to take special measures to stop the bleeding; still his arm never flinched a bit. Besides this, I tried many other tests, but all with the same result. It is my firm conviction that none of the incidents which happened while the medium was under control could have been the outcome of disease or any other known cause. He is so much maltreated and the condition of his body becomes such in that state, that any other man suffering in a similar way under ordinary circumstances would have felt pain all over his body for some time. It is very strange that, on the days the spirit announced before leaving the body that there would be no pain, the medium would not really feel the least pain on regaining consciousness, inspite of his body being severely hurt and handled while under trance. The religious instructions given through the medium's mouth in trance condition together with his manner and conduct then, could not have emanated from Govinda as we knew him."

II

To know Principal Jagadish Chandra Mukherjee, of the Brojomohan Institution of Barisal, is to revere



JAGADISH CHANDRA MUKHERJEE.
Died on 10-11-32 (24th Kartik 1339).

him. He has written thus of the same incidents:
"Having been intimately connected with spirit-circles

and many incidents relating thereto for nearly three months, in 1294 B.S., the following truth has clearly emerged in my mind, namely that the victory of spiritualism will be universal in no distant future, and that the inter-connection between this and the after-life will gradually become stronger and stronger. From the unexpectedly satisfactory answers to various intricate questions put to the medium (Govinda) under trance, and from the profound truths, sage advice and religious instruction which emanated from his mouth, I was not only bewildered but I considered those moments the happiest part of my life and I treasure their memory accordingly."

III

Among the many well-known persons who joined the circles, besides the gentlemen whose names have been mentioned above, was Babu Chundra Nath Das. About him Monoranjan Babu has written: "In worldly appraisement Chandra Nath Babu's value was not very great, but for his pure character and high ideals he was held in great esteem by the public. But for his unshaken faith in our integrity and honesty he would have altogether rejected the phenomena produced in our circles as untrustworthy, still he had his doubts in his mind. One day on coming to join the circle he said that if we could invoke a spirit into his body he would believe everything. I replied: "We shall try." What happened after this had better be described in Chandra Nath Babu's own words. He has written: "I was an unbeliever before; but after the wonderful things that have happened to me personally I could not but believe in them. I was not quite unconscious, but there is no doubt that my actions and movements were controlled by some extraneous and super-normal power. It could not have been electric power, for as soon as the Divine name was uttered by some friends, the entity or power left my body and disappeared. It is

impossible to express one's state of mind in such condition, but this much I can say confidently that the change in my mental outlook, wrought by this incident from that day forth, could not be accomplished



ASWINI KUMAR DATTA.
Died on 7-11-23 at the age of 68.

by hundreds of wise precepts and wholesome aphorisms; and I have profited enormously by the experience. I am now convinced that the influence I was subjected to was of a departed spirit and no other."

IV

The late Babu Aswini Kumar Dutt, the uncrowned king of Barisal and one of the most revered leaders of Bengal, wrote thus : "I have watched and personally witnessed many of the super-normal happenings at the house of Dr. Tarini Kumar Gupta. After as careful investigation as it was possible for me to do, I came to the conclusion that they could not have been caused by any other than discarnate entities."

The above incidents and many others incorporated in Monoranjan Babu's book "Asha Pradeep" happened in his presence.

My Lost Daughter "Jyotsna"

Babu Mukunda Lal Das Gupta, of 129, Raja Rajendra Lala Mitter Road, Calcutta, has sent the following :

"My only daughter, Jyotsna, left us for her eternal home on the 11th Kartick, 1338 B.S., at the age of 18. She was then a student of the second year class at the Brojomohan Institution of Barisal. Needless to say that, at her loss the world seemed to us overcast with gloom ; we lost all savour of life and our only thought was, "Shall we ever meet her again? Shall we ever be able to allay the bitterness of our grief by seeing her again?"

While mournfully speculating in this way, I remembered the supernormal and mediumistic powers of the widow of the late Babu Bankim Chandra Sen, Advocate, of Senhati, district Khulna. She has the reputation of possessing most wonderful clairvoyant and clairsaudient powers,—second to none in India. Many a bereaved parent had received consolation

from her. But she is now advanced in years, besides, is a respectable Hindu purdah lady, and only a



JYOTSNA.
Died on 29-10-31 (11th Kartik 1338)
at the age of 18.

few are fortunate enough to get into touch with her and secure her services.

What I did was to write a detailed letter to her stating all about Jyotsna. I wanted to know how she was keeping in after-life. I also sent her a letter addressed to Jyotsna and requested her to have it delivered to Jyotsna and get her reply.

A few days after this I received a letter from Bankim Babu's widow enclosing a reply to my letter. The letter, she said, had been written by herself but at Jyotsna's dictation. Jyotsna had certain peculiar characteristics in the turn of her thoughts and expressions, and those who had known her intimately while alive, could not mistake them in this letter.

On receipt of the letter, my younger brother, Amrita Lal, Head-Master of the Brojomohan Institution, started for Calcutta, and sought an interview with the lady. He had a long conversation with her regarding Jyotsna during the course of which she described the girl by her clairvoyant powers as possessing thick curly hair and wearing a red-bordered *Gerua sari*. Bankim Babu's widow had never seen Jyotsna in life and her description of her and of many matters relating to her was perfectly correct.

The lady told Amrita Lal : "In the letter Jyotsna dictated to me she always addressed her father as *Tumi* (thou) and not *Apni* (you). On asking the reason she replied that she had always been used to address her father so." This is perfectly true.

She further said : "Jyotsna was dictating so fast that at times it was very difficult for me to follow her." This is also perfectly true. From her childhood she used to speak very fast and the lady had no opportunity of knowing it.

Two months after my daughter's death, i.e., on the 31st December, 1931, Dr. Sudhir Kumar Chaudhury, of Barisal, advised me to get into contact with the spirit of my deceased daughter, by sitting

in circles, and also gave me necessary instructions for forming circles.

The following evening we formed a family circle with myself, the wife of my eldest son Nirmal Chandra, Parul, and the daughter of my youngest brother Amrita Lal, Sushama. We were greatly delighted at the spirit manifestation on the very first day of our sitting.

Encouraged by our first attempt, we went on holding circles every day after that and held long conversations with my daughter's spirit regarding after-life. After a few days like this my brother, Amrita Lal, suggested to put certain questions to the spirit with a view to testing its identity. I was, however, reluctant to do so as I was afraid the spirit of my daughter might take offence and refuse to make further communication. Yet after repeated requests from Amrita Lal I agreed.

We sat in a circle at 11 p.m. in which Amrita Lal was also present. After invoking Jyotsna's spirit, the following dialogue ensued at Amrita Lal's suggestion :

Q.—I do not doubt that you (Jyotsna) actually appear at our seances, but your mother would not believe it without some proofs. Can you give us some evidence of your identity which will satisfy her?

A.—Yes, I can.

Q.—Can you tell us on which side of your mother your youngest brother, Jhuntu, is now sleeping on the bed?

A.—On the left.

This was instantly verified to be correct by Amrita Lal himself going into the bedroom.

Q.—Your matric certificate is missing. Can you tell us where it is?

A.—It is inside my box.

Q.—Which box?

A.—In my writing case.

The certificate was immediately recovered from the writing case.

Q.—When you had eye-trouble you used the blue glasses of Amrita Lal. Did you return them to him?

A.—Yes, I did.

Q.—But he cannot find them. Do you know where they are?

A.—No.

Q.—Try if you can find them out.

A.—All right I shall try. (After a pause)—They are in the almirah.

They were recovered from the almirah.

One day I met my friend, Mr. P. K. G., who is reputed to be a good medium and a clair-voyant and clair-audient. He said: "I notice that Jyotsna is limping." I protested at the time but remembered afterwards that just before her death Jyotsna had a sore in one of her toes. The limping might have been probably due to this. My friend had never met Jyotsna in her life-time.

At Barisal we used to sit in circles regularly. We continued to hold circles even after our removal to Calcutta. One evening at about 8 or 9 o'clock we invoked the spirits of Jyotsna and my first wife. We asked them to go and appear before Bankim Babu's widow the same night so that we could ascertain from the lady the following day if they had actually gone to her. The next day when I went to her, the very first thing she did was to say of her own accord:

"Last night the spirits of your wife and daughter gave me a visit. Previously whenever I had met them, I noticed a brilliant aura round them like those belonging to spirits of higher spheres, but last night I did not notice it. On asking the reason why, Jyotsna said: "When father will come to-morrow to enquire about

our visit to you, if you tell him of the aura he would not believe it. That is why we have appeared before you exactly in our earthly counterpart."

Even now we sit in circles regularly. Many a bereaved person has also sat in our circles and received comfort by obtaining informations about their dear departed.

Bhupendra Nath Basu's Letters

The late Bhupendra Nath Basu was destined to suffer from two severe bereavements successively in the latter part of his life. This led him to sit at many seances in England with a view to seeking contact with the departed dear ones. The results of his experience he recorded in two letters, addressed to the late Golap Lal Ghosh, the then editor of the "Amrita Bazar Patrika," dated the 20th and 25th May, 1923, respectively. The letters are reproduced below :

First Letter

My dear Golap,—You have asked me to write to you my experiences of spiritualism so that you may publish them in your paper. I felt some hesitation at first, but I am convinced by what you said that, it might be helpful to others. You know how heavily I suffered last year. I lost my eldest grandson, a young man of much promise; and then a few weeks afterwards I lost my youngest son, who lived with me in England during the first three years of my stay there and thus greatly helped to soften the sense of separation from my family at my age. I was very much depressed and was in a state of great despondency after these two great shocks when your elder brother, the late Babu Moti Lal Ghosh, who, as you know, was always very kindly disposed towards me and who from his death-bed offered to me his sincere condolence, advised me to read some books on

spiritualism which he lent to me. He said that I would receive great consolation from them as I should be convinced of the fact that there was no death in the sense we understood it. I read all the books he sent to me and a few others which I bought.



BHUPENDRA NATH BASU.

Died on 16-9-24 (31st Vадra, 1331)
at the age of 66.

After my return to England I asked a friend of mine, who is well-known in society, to introduce me to spiritualists against whom there could be no suspicion of charlatanism. Through the help of this friend I was put in touch with Col. Cowley, a retired

Indian Officer living at Hampstead, who arranged a sitting for me with a lady of the name of Mrs. Johnson, on Sunday, the 8th October last. There was some difficulty at first to arrange this sitting as I had no spiritualistic experience before, but ultimately the difficulties were overcome and the sitting was arranged. I took with me my friend, Mr. N. C. Sen, who is Secretary of the Students' Advisory Committee, now under the High Commissioner of India. We went to Col. Cowley's place at about 3-45 in the afternoon. He introduced us to Mrs. Johnson, who was a very pleasant looking lady of middle age, and then, with all—*viz*, Mrs. Johnson, Col. Cowley, Mr. Sen and myself—went into a sitting room, the doors of which were closed and, after we had taken our seats, the lights were turned down and the blinds drawn to make the room perfectly dark. We sat on chairs, not exactly in a circle but in a small area, Mrs. Johnson being seated on my left, Mr. Sen on my right and Col. Cowley in my front. There was a trumpet, a little bigger than what we see in ordinary gramophones, placed in front of us. Mrs. Johnson informed us that her experiments did not always succeed at the first sitting and that we must be prepared for a disappointment. She said if her familiar spirit appeared the trumpet would be going round the room and we would feel that it was so going round by hearing taps on it and the trumpet would touch us lightly in different parts of our body, and if it did so we should say, "Thank you;" for she said, the touch would indicate the presence of the spirit. She also said that spirits were generally fond of music and it would help us if we would sing together. Her own familiar spirit which was that of a Lancashire boy very much liked cheerful music.

After the sitting commenced she began some songs in which we all joined and then, after about fifteen minutes, we heard the sound of taps on the trumpet from different parts of the room indicating to

us that the trumpet was moving about. The trumpet touched us very lightly in different parts of the body and then dropped on to the ground with a thud. Then we heard a voice quite distinctly talking to Mrs. Johnson. This voice had quite the Lancashire accent which we even foreigners could detect. After a time Mrs. Johnson said that she saw a figure standing behind me—a slim, tall, handsome young man with curly hair, aged thirty. And she also said that her spirit told her that it was my son, whom I had lost. I had not told Mrs. Johnson or Col. Cowley that I had lost a son or that he was just thirty years when he died. Mrs. Johnson said that the spirit of my son wanted to talk to me but that there was no sufficient force to enable him to do so. I asked the spirit if he was well. I heard three taps on the trumpet which Mrs. Johnson said meant an answer in the affirmative. Mrs. Johnson told me further, "Your son is very anxious about you." I believe, you remember, that my son was a very tall youngman of over 6 ft. 2 in. in height, slim, with curly hair and had a very striking appearance which all who saw him considered very handsome.

Mrs. Johnson then told me that she saw a figure of a bald-headed gentleman near me who was watching over me. At the time I did not understand who she was referring to. After this nothing happened so far as I was concerned. Turning to Mr. Sen she then said that she saw near him a short gentleman with turban on his head and an embroidered coat. Mr. Sen could not identify who this could be. Mrs. Johnson again said to Mr. Sen, "I see before you a lady with a peculiar dress with a veil on and another youngman with her;" and she said that they were his mother and brother. She told Mr. Sen that the lady wanted to speak to him and we heard a voice through the trumpet which was not sufficiently distinct for us to enable us to catch the words. Then she asked Mr. Sen if he knew of any song which his mother

liked and when he could sing himself, in which case the spirit would join with the son. She had said the same thing to me but, as you know, our sons are not in the habit of singing in the presence of their fathers and I did not know what was the favourite song of my son. Mr. Sen then sung a Bengali hymn which he said his mother used to sing every morning and to our surprise we heard a voice following the song, though it was difficult to make out the words.

There was nothing further to relate about this sitting, which lasted for about an hour. When we came away from the sitting, both Mr. Sen and I were struck by the close description, which was given by this lady of my son, who was of course well-known to my friend Mr. Sen. I made a note of this sitting in my diary and I am setting down here generally what took place at this sitting. Mrs. Johnson told us at parting that she was rather pleased at the success of our first attempt but she expected better results in the shape of hearing the spirits, with whom we wanted to talk, if we persisted in our efforts and had a few more sittings.

This experience of mine had a very disturbing effect on my mind. I wanted, if possible, to have more satisfactory communication with my son. I had to leave for Geneva the next week to attend the International Labour Conference. I returned early in November and tried through my friend, whom I have already referred, to get in touch with some other spiritualist medium. Through her I got an introduction to Mrs. Mackenzie, who is the Secretary of the Psychic Society at Holland Park. I called on Mrs. Mackenzie by appointment in the rooms of the Society. The house, where the Society is located, is a big one and situated in a fashionable part of London with arrangements for lectures and classes on psychic subjects. She made an appointment with me to meet a well-known spiritualist medium, Mrs. Cooper, on the 29th November, at 3-30 p.m. I went to the place

at the time appointed and Mrs. Mackenzie took me to a room upstairs and introduced me to Mrs. Cooper, who was seated in a room which was fairly large. After the introduction, which was merely to the effect that I was the gentleman expected, Mrs. Mackenzie retired. I saw in the middle of the room a musical instrument on a small stand and two chairs. I took my seat on the chair next to the musical instrument and Mrs. Cooper sat on my right holding my right hand in her left. The door was closed and the room was darkened. My left hand was on the handle attached to the musical instrument, which I wound up and set going. There was a trumpet in front. After a little while, Mrs. Cooper said that her familiar spirit, whom she called 'Nada', an Indian girl, had appeared and I heard a very pleasant young voice speaking through the trumpet. As in the case of my sitting with Mrs. Johnson, I felt the touch of the trumpet on different parts of the body. The words, which I heard through the trumpet, were in whispers but quite audible.

Then another spirit appeared and spoke through the trumpet and addressed me as 'brother', Nada's voice speaking distinctly said that it was my brother's spirit. Then addressing the voice which had spoken to me I asked, "How should I know that it is the spirit of my brother?" I heard the voice say, "We had visited the Taj together." I said there were others with whom also I had visited the Taj. The voice then named the illness of which my brother died. This was given correctly. It continued: "I died very peacefully and I am very happy now." The conversation was in English. The voice, which was of my brother's spirit, said that he wanted to give me a message and asked me to try automatic writing when the message would be given. I said I had tried it before but failed. He said he would give me strength to enable me to take down the message. Then the voice said, "I am very pleased to meet you. I have

met all our relations and we are all quite happy." Then he said: "Give my love to my wife across the waters." My brother's widow, as you know, lives with me with her children in my house. I asked the spirit to give me my brother's name. The answer came first as 'Indra' quite distinctly several times. Then the voice said 'Hitendra'. This, as you know, was not quite correct, because the name was 'Upendra'. The spirit wanted to see me again and then the seance broke up.

Of course, neither Mrs. Johnson nor Mrs. Cooper nor anybody else in England, so far as I know, knew of the death of my brother or the disease from which he died.

I had not thought of my brother, who died several years ago when I went to the seance nor was I thinking of him at the time. My heart was too full of my recent bereavements to think of sorrows whose severity time has mercifully softened; but the spirit of my son did not reveal itself to me at this sitting.

Second Letter

My dear Golap,—You will have noticed that at the seance I had in the rooms of Psychic Society of Holland Park on the 29th of November last, I did not get into touch with the spirit of my son as I was anxious to do. I made another appointment and went to the Society on Friday, the 8th of December last. The appointment was at 11-30 in the morning. I was taken straight up to Mrs. Cooper's room on the second floor, where I found her sitting. After I had gone in, the door was closed, the blinds drawn and the room was darkened as before. We were the only two people in the room. Mrs. Cooper was seated on my right and I held her left hand in my right. The musical instrument was on my left and the trumpet was in front of us. I turned the handle of the musical instrument with my left hand and set it going.

After a little while I heard Nada's voice say, "Your brother is again here." I said, "Well, brother, you could not give me your name quite correctly last time, can you do so now?"—"Yes," came the voice through the trumpet, "My name is Upendra" which, as you know, is correct.

Then Nada said, "Your father is here and wants to speak to you." I asked him where he was. He said: "In the third sphere and very happy." I asked him to give me his name which he could not. He said mother was with him and they were all very happy. When I went to the seance I was not thinking of my father at all, who died when I was 6 years old and of whom I have only a very faint recollection.

Then I asked Nada if I could be in touch with the spirit of my son. (You will have observed that so far I had no contact with my son's spirit either at the previous seance or at this one with Mrs. Cooper). My question no doubt implied that I had lost my son. Nada's voice came straight in answer to my question. "Your son is here, tall and slim and wants to speak to you."

Then I addressed the spirit of my son and said: "How should I know that you are the spirit of my son?" The voice came from the trumpet and said, "Dear father, heart, heart, heart," You will perhaps remember that my son passed away of heart trouble. After the word heart had been thrice repeated Mrs. Cooper asked me if my son had "passed over" from any trouble of the heart. I kept quiet and did not answer the question to avoid giving any indication.

Then I asked the spirit: "Can you give me any other sign?" The voice said "17th" twice. Mrs. Cooper again asked me if he had passed over on the 17th of any month. I said I was not sure of the date for I had had a sort of an impression that it was the 16th. Then I asked the spirit, "Can you give me the day and the month?" And the voice said, "Saturday, June." And this was correct. I then

asked, "Can you give me your name?" The voice said it was difficult. There was not sufficient strength but he would try and give some letters of the name. Then the voice repeated "th" twice. My poor son's



GIRINDRA NATH BASU.

Died on 17-6-21 (3rd Ashar, 1328)
at the age of 29.

name was Girindra Nath. Then I asked the spirit if he could give me any other sign. He said, "Yes, in our Drawing Room at home there is a picture of horses." I had not noticed this picture myself. However, I shall come to it later on.

In answer to my further question, "Are you quite happy?", the voice said, "Very happy." I said, "Are you not sorry to part from us?" The voice said, "I am often with you, dear father." Then the voice said, "I have got my two aunts with me." I asked him, "Can you give me the names?" The voice distinctly said "Seja". Probably you do not know that I have lost two sisters and my third sister, who was older than myself and whom I used to call "Seja Didi", died about a month before my son. She used to be very fond of my son and was staying in my house up to a very few days before her death. The word "Seja" came distinctly and in Bengali. The voice said, "Dear father, do not grieve. There is no death. I want to give you some message. Try automatic writing. The voice also said, "Next when you come, bring some flowers. The attraction of the flower may give me strength."

The Nada's voice said: "Power gone." The seance ended. It lasted about an hour.

I had got confused about the date of the death of my son and my impression was that it was the 16th of June. After coming out I consulted my diary and saw that Saturday, the 17th June, was the day my son had passed away. I had not recorded this in my diary but on that date I intended to give a lunch party of which I made a note and had to be given up owing to my son's death, and Saturday June was the 17th and not 16th.

I tried automatic writing in my rooms at night but did not succeed. I was not able to detach my own mind entirely from the writing and I was not sure whether it was my will or some other will that was guiding my hand and so I gave up the attempt.

This sitting did not quite satisfy me as my contact with the spirit of my son was very brief. I wanted to have another sitting and to test the effect of flowers. So I made another appointment for Thursday, the 14th December, at 3 P.M. In going to

Holland Park from the India Office by under-ground railway, one has to get down at Nottingham-Hill Station, where I expected I should be able to buy some flowers. Unfortunately the shops were closed for Thursday afternoon and I had to walk a fairly long way before I came to a flower shop which was open. I bought some narcissus and chrysanthemums. The narcissus was tied in a bunch. Arriving at the Psychic Society's place, 59, Holland Park, I was taken as usual to Mrs. Cooper's room. She asked me to put the flowers down on the floor and I placed them somewhat away from us and beyond the trumpet. Then the doors were closed, the room was darkened and we took our seats as usual.

First came the voice of Nada. She said that she saw before me the figure of a very beautiful young woman. I wondered who could she be. She said, "She is your daughter; there is a bonny little boy with her." I don't think you know that I lost a daughter about fourteen years ago during the first outbreak of beri-beri in Calcutta. She had left two little boys, the youngest of whom soon followed her. I asked Nada if the spirit could give me her name. Nada said, "She could not, there was not enough strength." She added the last part of the name was "L.A." and the name consisted of six letters. My daughter's name was Susila. I asked the spirit as to where and how she was. She said that she was in the fourth sphere and very happy. I asked her if she could give me any sign. The voice several times said "22". I did not then know what "22" meant. It might be her age, but I did not quite remember the age at which she passed away. The voice also said "Give my love to my husband at home." When I went to the seance I was not thinking at all of my daughter.

You will remember that both on the last occasion as well as on this it was not the spirit of my son, whom I was anxious to meet, who at first revealed itself to

me. And I asked Nada if my son's spirit was there. She said, "Yes, he is there, very tall, slim and handsome, with another youngman, darker and a great friend of his." Then I heard the voice of the spirit which again said "heart, heart, heart." I asked who was the youngman who was with my son and when did he pass away. I was thinking of my grandson. Nada's voice said, "He passed away after your son." This, of course, could not apply to my grandson who died two months before. The spirit of my son again said, "I am very very sorry for you, dear father, but I am always with you."

I asked the spirit if he could materialise for me to see or feel. Then I felt the touch of fingers on my forehead, as if a hand was lightly and quickly drawn across my forehead from left to right. It might be possible for Mrs. Cooper with her right hand, which was free, to pass the fingers over my forehead. But I was holding her left hand in my right and I did not feel any movement of her body. I also felt the touch of the fingers on my left hand, which was on the handle of the musical instrument. This would be impossible for Mrs Cooper to reach. And I felt touch of fingers on different parts of the body several times and also the touch of the trumpet. The voice said that he could not materialise for me to be able to see but he said that he would show me his stationary light and I saw in front of me distinctly some stationary points of light in the middle of the room. I also felt light touch of flowers, that were lying on the floor on my right hand in which I held Mrs Cooper's left hand. Mrs Cooper said that she also felt it. I asked the spirit if he could give me any flower and I felt a leaf coming into my hand which I found, after the seance was over, to be a leaf of one of the chrysanthemums which were placed on the floor. The spirit said "I shall show my light to you at night."

The seance was over in about an hour. The same night in my room in the hotel where I was stay-

ing and just before I went to bed I tried to look for the spots of light which I had seen at the sitting. But I did not see any. It was winter time. There was a fire burning in the grate and the room was fairly well-lighted with a glow of this fire. Probably that was why I saw no light.

I left London soon after on the 21st of December and reached Calcutta on the 8th January. The first thing I asked my wife was the age when my daughter Susila died and she said that it was twenty-two. I have since verified this statement as correct. As to the picture of horses, on examining the pictures in my drawing room, I saw a picture of two horses in rather an obscure corner of the room. I do not remember to have noticed it before.

I had some correspondence with Sir Oliver Lodge and his secretary was kind enough to refer me to some spiritualist mediums from whom, she said, I would receive great consolation. But as I had to come away almost immediately I was not able to utilise the information which was placed at my disposal. This is very nearly all the experience I had at seances while away in London, except of two others, which I had just before I left and of which unfortunately I had no time to keep notes. These also were very remarkable in their way. One sitting was with Mrs. Johnson, whom I mentioned in my previous letter, and the other was with an Austrian lady of great psychic powers.

How I Became a Believer

Srijut Sukumar Sen Gupta was a Superintendent of Police in Bengal. He retired from service on the 15th of December, 1930. He lost his only daughter, Amiya, on the 23rd November, 1930, i.e., a few days before his retirement, when she was but 26 years of age. Needless to say that both Mr. and Mrs. Sen

Gupta were sorely stricken by the premature death of their only child, and Mr. Sen Gupta went to England with a view to getting into touch with the spirit of their beloved daughter, if possible. Up till now he was a confirmed sceptic regarding spiritualism, but he became a convert, after several unsuccessful attempts, on getting proofs of the existence of his daughter's spirit in the life beyond at a seance held in London. Details are recorded in a letter he addressed to me which is reproduced below :

“Dada Babu,—You have asked me to let you know, for publication in your book ‘Life Beyond Death’, how I came to believe in the survival of soul after death. Hence I am writing you this letter. I am deeply grateful to you for your sincere love and affection for us.

You know we were blessed with only one child whom we named Amiya. She was as physically beautiful as mentally gifted. She was specially well-versed in music and other fine arts, and any one who heard her sing and saw her works of art could not but have been charmed. It is not a mere fond parent's exaggeration but an absolute truth. She was married and, at the time of her death, left behind her husband, two little daughters and one son, besides her disconsolate parents, to mourn her untimely loss.

For sometime before her end she had been suffering from acute pain in the stomach, in the region of the liver. It was diagnosed to be due to gallstone. After some unsuccessful treatment she was placed in the hands of Dr. Lalit Mohon Banerjee, the famous surgeon attached to the Carmichael Medical College, at Belgatchia. She was removed to the College Hospital at Dr. Banerjee's suggestion, where she was kept under observation for a fortnight, after which she was operated on by him on the 23rd of November, 1930, but, unfortunately, she succumbed within three hours of the operation. Thus passed away our darling, the apple of our eye, plunging us into the deepest abyss

of grief. It was so sudden, so unexpected, that we were quite unprepared for it, and the shock was all the more severe. We have since been regretting every day of our life why we agreed to have recourse to operation. But it must have been God's will and so we are getting resigned to our fate.

Amiya was greatly devoted to the goddess Kali, and she took a picture of the goddess with Sree Sree Ramkrishna with her to the hospital. After operation, when she regained consciousness for a second or two, she asked the attending nurse to place the picture on her breast, and she passed away with her last prayer to the goddess of her choice on her lips. It speaks highly of her spiritual advancement that during the last minute of her life she should have forgotten her near and dear relatives and thought only of the Supreme Being. But it was a grievous blow to us, who had nothing else to fall back upon. Our only desire in our old age was to see her happy and contented with her husband and children, but God denied us even this scant happiness.

We had never thought of after-life before, but now we were deeply anxious to investigate its possibilities. With that object in view I began studying the literature on the subject as suggested by my maternal uncle, Professor Suresh Chandra Dutta Gupta, of Carmichael College, Rangpur, who is deeply learned in occult and spiritual subjects, and had also developed the powers of clairvoyance and clair-audience. In reply to one of my letters intimating the death of our dear child, my uncle wrote of the following strange incident :

"The day previous to Amiya's departure her astral body appeared before me and we had an earnest talk for about half an hour, mostly on religious subjects. She ended with expressing her regret at your being so much engrossed in worldly matters."

My uncle did not know anything about Amiya's serious illness or about her removal to hospital for

operation. But seeing her astral body he suspected that either she had just left her physical body for good or that her death was imminent. He was greatly disturbed in his mind over this and was thinking of sending a telegram to me. But for some reason or other he was prevented from doing it and the telegram was never despatched. The hand of Providence was writ large in this, for the girl was destined to die and had he sent off the wire, I might have stopped the operation at the last moment and who knows her life might have been saved. But that was not to be.

On the following day, shortly after her death, her spirit-form appeared before him, when he was dining with some friends, and conversed with him for about five minutes. My uncle was so engrossed in conversation that he did not notice a cat quietly sneaking off with some fish from his plate which raised a laugh from his friends at his expense. He was now convinced of Amiya's final exit from this world, and as a matter of fact she said so to him and also requested him to look after her stricken parents, husband and children.

In his letter to me my uncle sent me a list of books on psychism and spiritualism, which he advised me to study. I obtained considerable information on the subject from some of them, but instead of appeasing they increased my thirst for knowledge, and I was all the more anxious to know if poor Amiya's soul really existed, after separation from her physical body. As the Calcutta Psychical Society was then in a dormant condition I made up my mind to visit Europe in search of the thing I longed for.

I left India on the 25th of May, 1931, in a French boat arriving in London, via Continent, about a month after. There I enlisted myself as a member of the Marylebone Spiritualist Society, the oldest of its kind in London. I began studying the literature from its library and attending lectures and seances both at Queen's Hall and at the headquarters of the

Society in Russell Square. I came across a number of well-known mediums there but the one that impressed me most was Mrs. Estelle Roberts. Although she did not, or could not, give any proofs in my own case, yet her spirit-descriptions and the details of private affairs given on public platforms were most wonderful. Almost every one of her descriptions was admitted to be correct by those concerned.

At one of the public clairvoyances on 28th July, 1931, where about 200 persons were present, Mr. Thomas Wyatt, the medium, addressing me said that an Indian girl, of fair complexion, aged about 25 or 26, was present and anxious to get in touch with me. He further said that the girl, before passing over, had suffered from acute pain in the stomach. The description and cause of death exactly applied to my deceased daughter, Amiya. The medium added that an old man was in company of the girl, and the description given partially, though to a great extent, applied to my late father. The medium said that they wanted me to know that they were quite well, and that I would be successful in one of my missions within two months and half. Although nothing of an evidential nature was given at this meeting, sufficient was given which set me thinking for the time being, and I grew yet more anxious for further elucidation of the tempting subject.

Two days after this, i.e., on the 30th July, I sat in a private seance in the society's rooms at 7-30 P.M. where the number of sitters was confined to 10. The medium was Mrs. Livingstone, a Spanish lady. The medium addressing me said that the spirit of a certain Indian lady wanted me to know that I would be returning to India within two months and a half and that on returning home I would be engaged in the work of dissemination of spiritualism. Needless to say that I did not attach the slightest importance or give credence to this statement. Returning to my residence

immediately after the seance I recorded the following in my diary : "A ridiculous message was given to me to say that I would return to India soon and that I would have a lot to do with the teaching of spiritualism to humanity."

But strange to say I had to leave England unexpectedly for my home on the 20th of October, i.e., exactly a month and 20 days after the seance, and I worked hard on returning to Calcutta to revive the Calcutta Psychical Society, and am at present one of its Secretaries. I leave it to the readers to draw their own inference as to whether the message, mentioned above, had any reference to my later movements and activities.

Shortly after the incident of the 30th July, I came to know that a famous direct-voice medium of America, Miss Hazel Ridley, would be visiting London soon, and that after holding 10 or 12 seances here she would proceed elsewhere. As seances were scheduled to commence on the 17th of August, I went to the Marylebone Society's office on the 2nd August and secured a seat for the first seance on payment of eleven shillings. Miss Ridley came with an extraordinary reputation; her powers were said to be wonderful. So I was very anxious to have a sitting with her. She was about 30 or 32 years old and of delicate constitution. Unlike other direct-voice mediums she did not use trumpets. In her case voices emanated from space from all parts of the room—and sometimes from her own mouth.

At the 17th August seance there were only eight sitters, among whom I was the solitary Indian. Miss Ridley had arrived in London only two days before. She was totally ignorant of the Bengali language and she had never met me before the seance nor did she know anything about me and my affairs.

The room was dark except for a mild red light hung from the ceiling over our heads. We could fairly see all the sitters, the medium and everything else

in the room with the aid of that light. It was a sound-proof room, specially designed for seances, with only one door which was bolted and locked from inside so that no outside intrusion was possible.

After forming the circle a hymn was sung in a chorus and the usual prayer said. The medium slowly fell into trance with her head resting on the back of the chair. I was sitting just opposite her, the intervening space between us being about 4 or 5 feet, so that I could see her distinctly. A manly voice—quite different from her own normal voice—came out of her throat and greeted all present. This voice belonged to her control spirit.

Thereafter a strange but faint voice emanated from somewhere and addressed a particular sitter, and between them intimate conversation ensued for some time. Three or four sitters were addressed in turn like this—all in different voices—and like conversation followed.

Then came my turn. A very faint voice, like mew, mew, came from the floor which no one recognised. The control spirit then requested each of us to ask the "voice" for whom it was intended. I said: "Do you want to speak to me? Who are you?"

In reply a faint voice answered: "*Ami Amiya, Ami .Amiya,*" in Bengali, i.e., "I am Amiya, I am Amiya." (Amiya being my deceased daughter's name).

I was taken aback by the reply and particularly, by the tone of the voice. It was evident whoever the entity was, it was straining very hard to speak. The sound was a little nasal and faint—almost akin to the voice of my poor daughter on the eve of her passing away.

The "voice" again said in Bengali, as if in great impatience, "I am Amiya, I am Amiya. Don't you recognize me?"

I put her some questions in Bengali but did not get any distinct reply. I could hear only a sort of

droning voice making an effort to speak but failing in the attempt. But the voice had such a strong



AMIYA.

Died on 23-11-30 (7th Aghran 1337)
at the age of 26.

resemblance to that of Amiya that I could not but be struck with it. The guide-spirit then came to the rescue and addressing me said that Amiya's spirit was

not used to speak like this and she was finding the European atmosphere at the sitting a great hindrance to her efforts. After 2 or 3 seances she might succeed.

I said : "If she is unable to speak in Bengali she might answer my questions in English. I must, however, put the questions in Bengali." Amiya, of course, had a smattering knowledge of English but she could not speak it fluently. The conversation was then carried on as above, i.e., I put the questions in Bengali and she answered in broken English.

In reply she said that she visited me, her mother, her husband and her children daily. She was very happy. Every day she went to a certain temple to worship and every day she practised music, and at that particular moment she was engaged in painting a picture. She also said that I would return to India in two months' time.

After this she asked me, "What has mother done with my hair?"

Not being able to comprehend the meaning I said : "I do not understand what you say."

She replied : "You have written to mother for my hair, but she has lost it."

I then remembered that I had really sent a letter to my wife 3 or 4 days back, asking for a part of Amiya's hair, which was with her, for having psychometry done by another medium. This was not known to anybody else. Accordingly I admitted to her that I had actually written to her mother for the hair.

Amiya then added : "Although mother has lost or mislaid the hair she had with her, she will manage to obtain some from elsewhere and send it on to you."

I then asked : "As according to your statement I am to leave London within two months, do you think I shall receive your hair before that?"

She answered : "Yes".

In fact, the hair sent by my wife had reached me a week before I left London, and psychometry was also done with it.

Three months after the seance when I returned home to Calcutta I asked my wife about the hair, and she replied that the portion retained by her had been actually mislaid, that she took some from our son-in-law and sent it to me. This is strange but true. No question of sub-consciousness or mental telepathy or any other plausible theory can explain this case, as I myself was not aware of the loss of the hair by my wife till three months after the seance.

For fully 54 years of my life I had no occasion to think of after-life, nor indeed had I any inclination to do so. It is true that I had read 2 or 3 books on the subject but that very superficially. It was only when we lost our only child and our heart was empty, that my eagerness to know more about it grew more and more. Our only thought was, "Shall we meet our lost child again?"

After my experience in England I am constrained to believe that there is a life after death, that the soul is immortal, and that after our own transition we shall meet our near and dear ones who have gone before us.

The Davenport Brothers in Calcutta

The Davenport Brothers and Mr. Fay, accompanied by an English servant, a very small and smart man, came to India in the hot season. Their charge was one hundred and fifty rupees per night. As the reputation had preceded them, we closed with them no sooner than they reached the city. In the afternoon the English servant brought the cabinet pieces in a hackery to our place. They were adjusted by him in our parlour in our presence in the absence of the brothers and Fay. So we could see there was no trickery in the construction of the cabinet. The hall in which the seance was to be held was ours, the guests to be invited were our friends, so there was no chance of tricking us by trap-doors, or with the hel

of confederates. Seeing one of the parts of the cabinet damaged, we asked the servant the cause of it. He said that English roughs had done it. "You have no idea," said he, "gentle as you are, of how these English roughs behave. In England we had to carry this cabinet under police protection from one place to another. For if the English roughs only knew that the cabinet was meant for spiritual seances they would have forcibly carried it away, broken it to pieces, or burned it." The part damaged was a proof of this. By the bye, the cabinet was nothing more than a small wooden chest which could accommodate two comfortably, and three with difficulty.

At first we intended imposing conditions. But they were in our parlour; so we were very confident that any trickery on their part would surely be detected and that speedily. The Brothers looked like rustics, and evidently it was Mr. Fay who led them by the nose, indeed, it seemed to us that they could not be cunning enough to trick others. How then was it that the spirits were so kind to them, while they never influenced worthier men—men more intellectual and refined?

They offered themselves to be tied. But we did not place much reliance upon the operation. We believed that perhaps the Brothers knew the art of untying themselves, for they had done so even when tied down strongly by professional men and sailors. Yet several of us did the tying and, as seemed to us, effectually too. The room was not darkened, and we watched the cabinet closely. There was an aperture in the cabinet covered by a black piece of cloth. Suddenly this piece of cloth was removed and we saw two hands very beautiful, very white, and very small, exposed to us. They were removed in half a second. Indeed, no time was given to touch them. The exhibition of the hands made no impression on us whatsoever. It was suggested that they had somehow untied themselves and were exhibiting something

which looked like small human hands. Soon after the Brothers came out of the cabinet and the rope was found in a heap in a corner of it.

The Brothers then invited a spectator to pass sometime in the cabinet with them. Raja Janoki Ballav of Dimla, Rungpore, agreed, he having no belief in the existence of ghosts. The Brothers were tied as before but the Raja was left free. A little after the door of the cabinet was opened and the Brothers came out, but the Raja was found tied in their place, with a hat on his head. Some wonder was expressed at this, for the Raja declared that he had been tied in the course of a second, and if it was by the Brothers he did not perceive it.

At last the light was put out. The Brothers were tied as before. Some musical instruments were made luminous by being rubbed with phosphorous. The room was made pitch dark. Very soon the musical instruments began to fly about over our heads. This we could perceive because of the phosphoric light which partially betrayed them and of the sound they made by coming in contact with the opposing current of air. But what made the motion of the musical instruments clear was that we felt them to be flying over our heads.

Fancy, fifty or sixty of us were sitting huddled together. If the Brothers and Fay at all moved the instruments it was yet impossible for them to come into our midst and move the instruments over our heads, some of which in fact touched the ceiling. One incident proved the incident to be a genuine ghostly production. Mahatma Sisir Kumar was the principal man in the party. He was sitting in pitch dark in the midst of fifty or sixty people. What the thing did was to pull Sisir Kumar by the nose. This could have been done only by one whom the darkness did not prevent from seeing clearly and whose body was ethereal. We also saw on that occasion the coat "trick" which the spirits showed on the body of

Mr. Fay. This means that while his hands remained tied the coat was taken off from his body, as it were by a jerk.

The following incident appears in the "Biography of the Davenport Brothers" by Dr. Nichol of London :

The Brothers were imprisoned in Oswego, and when released, related how they were liberated ; and these facts were supported by an affidavit before Mr. Justice Barnes—all under the sanction of an oath. Here it is : "Be it known to all people, that in the seventh month, A.D. 1859, we, the undersigned were imprisoned in the common jail in the city of Oswego, N.Y., on account of propagating our religious principles ; and that after twenty-nine days of our confinement, at evening, when we were all in our prison-room together as we had just been locked in by the jailor, we having truly answered to his call, a (spirit) voice spoke and said, 'Raud, you are to go out of this place this night. Put on your coat and hat, be ready'. Immediately the door was thrown open, and the voice again and again said, 'Now walk quickly out and on to the attic window yonder, and let thyself down by a rope, and flee from this place. We will take care of the boys. There are many angels present, though but one speaks. That this deed absolutely occurred in our presence, we do most solemnly and positively affirm, before God and angels and men.

Subscribed and sworn before me, this first day of Angues August, 1859.

(Sd.) JAMES BARNES,
Justice of the Peace.

"Ira Erastus Davenport."

"Luke P. Raud."

PART II

CHAPTER I

THEORY OF RE-BIRTH

Re-birth or re-incarnation means the succeeding life in this or the next world, after the cessation of the present one. It is so stated in the Bhagavad Geeta (4. 5.): "Oh Arjuna, both you and Myself have already been born many times" and in another verse (2. 27) it is stated, "Death is sure to follow birth and birth again is sure to follow death." Now the seers of the past tried to solve the ever-perplexing problem, "How this inequality in the condition of beings is to be explained?" God is believed by all to be merciful and omnipotent and so these inequalities existing in His creation seem to bewilder human mind. And moreover the world appears to be too vast a field for experiences to be gathered within the short compass of a man's earthly life. The only answer that can be put forward is the re-incarnation of our souls, and the present life is determined in its character and realisation by the thoughts, desires and actions of our previous life or lives.¹ Not that we are born this time, not that we will be born only next time, but that we are being born continuously from the time of creation and will continue to be born again and again until we are freed from this bondage. Thus an attempt is made to reconcile the awful difference in the destiny of living creatures with the impartiality of the Creator, for God

¹ Vide *Chhandogya Upanishad*, III. 14. 1. Beings are subject to their thoughts. As their thoughts will be in this life, so their thoughts will be in the next. *Brihad-aranyakya*, IV. 3. 12. Our souls go there, where they desire to go. *Mundaka*, III. 2. 2.; *Brh. Aranakya*, IV. 9. 5.

Himself has declared in the Geeta, "All beings are equal to me. None receives more favour than others." Badarayana tells us in the Brahmasutra¹ that partiality of God is not to be inferred, because there is seeming injustice and bewildering inequality in His creation. Sankaracharya commented on it as follows :

"It is true that some beings are found in this world to be happy, some very unhappy, some between the two, but that does not prove God's partiality or His cruelty. Because God does not create without referring to other things. The difference and inequalities between His creatures are due to their acquired Karma or destiny. So the inequalities in this divine creation are due solely to the difference in the sum-total of the actions of the beings themselves and God is only an apparent destiner." The Miman-saka School of Philosophy for the first time recognised the supremacy of the doctrine of Karma and it laid great stress on this and thereby excluded the existence of God. According to it, Karma produces its results automatically. A being enjoys or suffers in its present life as the reward or punishment respectively for acts done in previous lives. But it forgets one thing. Can the material world move on by itself without the command of an extraneous agency? Though the other schools of Hindu philosophy and other religions have recognised the supreme hand of God even in dispensing justice to His creatures, according to their conduct in previous lives, a few pertinent questions may arise : (1) What is the nature of Karma? (2) How was the first animal-life determined? (3) What is the motive-force of Karma? (4) Has Karma any independent influence on the future life of beings? These are very difficult questions to answer and lead us to a vicious circle. It is more of a theory based upon hypothesis and deductive reasoning arising out of certain intellectual difficulty and metaphysical

¹ Brahmasutra, II. 1. 34.

necessity in the understanding of the working of Providence and to explain certain personal experiences or remarkable coincidences.

Now the question is : "Is the re-birth theory in contradistinction to the spirit theory, we have so long discussed?" Spirit theory speaks of the evolution or involution of humanity in the spirit-world. It will seem strange if in the evolution or involution one has to perceive the same sort of things, already experienced in one's previous life. We do not deny the re-birth of a man in this very world to complete his knowledge of it. This is illustrated in the case of the re-birth of an idiot or of a child. A soul is sent to this world to acquire individuality and as soon as it becomes a man distinct and separate from others, it is taken to the other world for eternal progress. The idea is this, that a soul is born in the world like a lump of clay and acquires much valuable experience in his life-time. If he has again to be re-born in this world, it will mean ruin—an absolute ruin, caused by re-birth. Again God is admittedly merciful. But to declare that a man has to be born again on this earth, is to declare practically that the man ceases to exist after death and to proclaim God to be a monster of cruelty, for He, after instilling love in the human breast, separates loving hearts for ever. The most cruel man would abhor to do such a thing. It is also an insult to the omnipotence and goodness of God. It means also that God is so bad an Architect that He has to make million attempts for the purpose of making a soul of the proper kind. The theory of re-birth means that there is no future life; for according to it every man after his birth, loses his identity. If men live after death, death is a blessing, but if they are born again as different beings after death, then death is the greatest calamity which can be conceived. So this theory of re-birth means that God creates man, and then puts that unfortunate being into almost perpetual torture. We men, however, cannot wantonly separate loving

hearts, though the merciful God is doing it always, if the doctrine is true. The fierce Germans believed that the pleasures of Heaven consisted in ceaseless slaughter of enemies. You cut off the head of your enemy, but that does not kill him. For if it did, you would not be able to enjoy the same pleasure again. So no sooner you cut off the head of your enemy, the severed head attaches itself again to the trunk to give you the pleasure of beheading him again. So, according to this theory of re-birth, God kills His creature but allows him to be born again, though a quite different man, so that He can kill the poor fellow again. This goes on for millions of times. At last He is tired of the pastime, so do you know what is the prayer of these men to God? They pray to Him thus: "Merciful God, instead of killing me in the manner a million times, kill me once for all, annihilate me so that I may be saved from further births." We have got also in our sacred literature the similar story of persecution popularly told in the re-incarnation of Kalnemi as Kamsa, who had to be annihilated in all his phases by God, the destroyer of evil.

It should be noted here also that immortality of soul does not imply our re-birth in this world. On the other hand it means our birth in another world. In this world progress is the law. A man, who has got experience of this world, has no need to come back again here. Moreover there is no difficulty with God to create new souls and to people this earth if there be immortality of souls. For if He could not do it, how could He do so in the beginning? As for the apprehension of the spiritual world being over-peopled, we are sure that the omnipotent God will somehow or other manage to find accommodation for us all.

We have by this time been able to demonstrate beyond doubt that the theory of re-birth is based somewhat on imagination and misconception. The theorists lose sight of the fact that annihilation would be infinite times better than to be born again and again in this

world. Moreover they must not forget also that the onus of proof is shifted on those who assert a particular doctrine. The pertinent question that may be put to them is—"where is the positive evidence to prove this doctrine of re-birth?"

As we turn over the pages of the Vedic literature, we find also that the doctrine of re-birth is nowhere contemplated by the Sruti writers. We shall refer in the following pages to some original texts, but before we do so, it will be somewhat interesting to refer to the opinion of a well-known English writer. According to W. W. Hunter¹, the Aryan idea of immortality of soul originated with the immortality of Yama, who was the first man to pass through death into immortality. The Zend legend of the Persians also lends support to this doctrine, for we find it stated there that in the kingdom of Yima, son of Vivanghant, death was not known then by the denizens, sin and disease crept into the world, the slow necessity of death hastened its step and the old king retired with a chosen band from the polluted earth into a kingdom where he still reigns. Similar is the idea expressed in the following verses of Rig Veda :

"Honour the king with thine oblations, Yama,² Vivasvana's son, who gathers men together, who travelled to the lofty heights above us, who searches out and shows the path to many".³

"Yama first found for us a place to dwell in this pasture (that) never can be taken from us. Men born on earth treat their own paths that lead them whither our ancient Fathers have departed".⁴

"Go forth, go forth upon the ancient pathways whereon our Pitris of old have gone before us. There

¹ Rural Bengal.

² This Yama is not to be identified with Yama of the Puranas.

³ R.V. X. 14 1.=A.V. 18. 1. 49. [18. 3. 13 (partially)]. The same verse has been repeated later in M.S. 4. 14. 16 and T.A. 6. 1. 1.

⁴ R.V. X. 14. 2=A.V. 18. 1. 50 and repeated later in M.S. 4. 14. 16.

shalt thou look on both the kings enjoying their sacred food, God Varuna and Yama".⁵

"Go hence, depart ye, fly in all directions : this place for him the Fathers have provided. Yama bestows on him a place to rest in adorned with days and beams of light and waters".⁶

"Run and outspeed the two dogs, Sarma's offspring, bridled, four-eyed, upon the happy pathway. Draw nigh then to the gracious minded Fathers where they rejoice in company with Yama".⁷

"May they ascend, the lowest, highest, mid-most Fathers who deserve a share of Soma. May they who have attained the life of spirits, gentle and righteous, aid us when we call them".⁸

"Come Agni, come with countless ancient Fathers dwellers in light, primeval, God-adornes, Eaters and drinkers of oblations, truthful, who travel with the Deities and Indra".⁹

"Thou, Jatavedas, knowest well the number of Fathers who are here and who are absent, of Fathers whom we know and whom we know not, accept the sacrifice well-prepared with portions".¹⁰

There are other verses to show that cremation suggested the most solemn method of severing the mortal from the immortal part of the world. Death is a new birth rather than an annihilation of the human being and Fire is the liberator. His friends stand by the pyre as in the natal bed and utter funeral hymns to Agni. The following are some of the funeral and sacrificial hymns addressed to Agni :

"Come to us, Agni, with the gracious Father who dwell in glowing light, the very kavyas, who

⁵ R.V. X. 14. 7.=A.V. 18. 1. 54 and repeated in M.S. 4. 14. 16 and Ash. 6. 10. 19

⁶ R.V. X. 14. 9.=A.V. 18. 1. 55 and V.S. 12. 45, T.S. 4. 2. 4. 1., M.S. 2. 7. 11.

⁷ R.V. X. 14. 10.=A.V. Kaus. 18. 2. 11.

⁸ R.V. X. 51. 1.=A.V. 18. 1. 44 and M.S. 4. 10. 6, A.B. 3, 37. 12.

⁹ R.V. X. 15. 10.=A.V. 18. 3. 48.

¹⁰ R.V. X. 15. 13.=V.S. 19. 67; As. 2. 19. 22.

thirsted 'mid the Gods, who haste hitherto oblation winners, theme of singers' praises".¹¹

"Thou Agni, Jatavedas, when entreated, didst bear the offering which thou madest fragrant. And give them to the Fathers who did eat them with Sradh. Eat, thou God, the gifts we bring Thee"¹²

"Burn him not up, nor quite consume him, Agni, let not his body or his skin be scattered. O Jatavedas, when thou hast matured him then send him on his way unto the Fathers".¹³

"When thou hast made him ready, Jatavedas, there do thou give him over to the Fathers, when he attains unto the life that waits him, he shall become the Deities' Controller".¹⁴

"Again, O Agni, to the Fathers send him who, offered in thee, goes with our oblations. Wearing new life let him increase his offspring: let him rejoin a body, Jatavedas".¹⁵

"Forbear, O Agni, to upset this ladle: the Gods and they who merit some love it. This ladle, this which served the Gods to drink from, in this Immortal Deities rejoice them".¹⁶

"I send afar flesh-eating Agni, bearing off stains may he depart to Yama's subjects. But let this other Jataveda carry oblation to the Gods for he is skilful".¹⁷

"I choose as God for father-worship Agni, flesh-eater, who hath past within your dwelling, while looking on this other Jataveda. Let him light flames in this supreme assembly".¹⁸

R.V. X. 15. 9.=A.V. 18. 3. 47.

R.V. X. 15. 12.=A.V. 18. 3. 42.

R.V. X. 16. 1.=A.V. 18. 2. 4.

R.V. X. 16. 2.=A.V. 18. 2. 4.

R.V. X. 16. 5.=A.V. 18. 2. 10.

R.V. X. 16. 8.

R.V. X. 16. 9.

R.V. X. 16. 10.

"With offerings meet, let Agni bring the Fathers who support the Law. Let him announce oblations paid to Fathers and Deities".¹⁹

"Right gladly would we set thee down, right gladly make thee burn and glow. Gladly bring Yearning Fathers nigh to eat the food of sacrifice".²⁰

We also find passages in Atharvaveda,²¹ which totally disprove the theory of transmigration of soul. "Truly," says Roth, "we here find, not without unadorned language with childlike conviction." Thus it will not be unjust to conclude after the manner of Hunter that the Vedic faith in immortality was infinitely firmer than anything to be found in the Semitic writings or in the subsequent Aryan literature of Greece and Rome.

The theory of re-birth was of a very late origin in Hindu religion. It is generally believed by oriental scholars that re-birth or transmigration had no existence in the ancient Vedic period.

Roth (2. D. M. 9. 46. 759) and Goldner (Vedische Studies II. 288) tried to prove the existence of transmigration in the Rig Veda (10. 14. 2 and 4. 42. 1). The passages with the help of which they wanted to prove the hypothesis are clearly too vague.

The conviction that every individual is reborn after death as a result of merit already acquired and has to undergo the consequences of sin committed by him occurs for the first time in the Satapatha Brahmana. The Satapatha goes further as it describes the condition of the soul in its future life.²² Moreover in the Satapatha,²³ as well as in the Taittiriya Brahmana²⁴ will be found the germ of the later doctrine of transmigration and the fear of repeated

¹⁹ R.V. X. 16. 11.

²⁰ R.V. X. 16. 12.

²¹ A.V. IX. 5. 1., XII. 3. 17; VI. 1. 20. 3; IX. 5. 27. etc.

²² Passages in X. 1. 54, XI. 4. 4. may be cited.

²³ II. 3. 3. 9; X. 1. 4. 14; 2. 6. 19; 5. 14; II. 4. 3. 20 etc

²⁴ III. 11. 8 6.

death in the future world. The same view appears in the Kausitika Brahmana.²⁵

Goldner also found out a reference to a pre-existence of Vasistha in 7. 33. 9. But scholars differ from his view, which according to them is still less acceptable. Following the suggestions of Boyer (*Journal Asiatique*, 1901, II. 154) Windisch saw transmigration in the wish in the passage of the Rg. Veda 10. 14, 14, that Yama might give long life among the gods. But A. B. Keith (*J.R.A.S.*, 1910, p. 215) pointed out that Windisch's view would be open to serious objection. Bohtlingk tried to prove that there would be Samaskara but without Karma in Rg. Veda 1. 164. 30, 38. But Pischel (*Vedische Studies*, II. 219. 221) says there is no trace of transmigration in these verses, which are but enigmas and his version cannot be accepted. Thus the theory of re-birth is of a very late origin in India and is the presumption underlying not only Jainism and Buddhism, but also the Indian philosophical systems.

And it was gradually incorporated in the creed of the latter-day Hindus. We have already seen that there is no such reference in the Vedic literature itself and we shall now refer to passages in the Vedanta Darshan, and works of Rishi Gautama and Kanada to establish our viewpoint. Before we do so, we may point out that the theosophists, no doubt, gave a new lease of life to this theory but latterly they have practically come to abandon it. For now it is admitted by them that if there is re-birth it takes place after thousands of years after death. But this even is not supported by any ancient literature of the Hindus.

The following interpretation of Vedanta on the Vedic text that "the mortal becomes immortal" will further make our statement more clear.

"These texts have no reference to the dissolution of the body".²⁶ It is shown in the Vedanta that the

²⁵ 25. 1.

²⁶ Vedanta Sutra 10, Sec. 2. Chapter IV.

Srutis declare that those who have worked out their salvation by true knowledge and true devotion to God to enter a sphere called the divine sphere (Deva Jana), otherwise, called the solar sphere while those who have not attained to salvation or are only on the way enter another sphere called the sphere of the ancestors (Pitri loka) otherwise called the lunar sphere (Chandra loka). The spirits of the first class have no work on their own account; their souls are as if they were universalized and they live for the good of all beings, approaching the supreme soul of all. But the spirits of the second class, have individualistic existence and work on their own individual account and have worldly leanings and worldly enjoyments and sufferings in continuation of what they had in this mundane world.

The former never return by way of transmigration of soul. But the latter may so return, unless by further spiritual culture (in respect to which the spirits of the Deva Jana or the solar sphere, are ready to assist them) they pass into that higher sphere. This is the Vedantic teaching of the spirit world, put in a nutshell.

In Gautama too we find the following texts :—

“The eternity of the soul proves the existence of the spirit forms”.²⁷

“That from one body another body preceeds is a matter of direct observation”.²⁸

In reply to the suggestion of an opponent the author says :—

“But an earthen pot (which is a body) when broken into pieces, does not take the shape of another earthen pot”.²⁹

“However it is undeniable that the body earthen pot proceeded in succession to some other body”.³⁰

²⁷ Gautama, 10. I. 4.

²⁸ Ibid., 11. I. 4.

²⁹ Ibid., 12. I. 4.

³⁰ Ibid., 13. I. 4.

"This is a case of the want of one environment being filled up by another environment and not a case of being brought into existence by the total destruction of another thing".³¹

"But co-existence of two conflicting environments can not be asserted".³²

"It can not be said that the past and the future stand each as they came of the other".³³

Gautama refutes the Sankhya doctrine that gross body contains in itself a subtle body which it gives up or the passive entity of the soul. And so according to him "Indeed what is destroyed cannot lead to any result".³⁴ Rishi Gautama ignores the much accepted Sankhya theory of the existence of *linga sharira* and asserts that the soul directly controls the gross nerve centres and that when these gross nerve centres are dissolved, a subtle body is formed at the dissolution by virtue of the law that the soul cannot be without an environment and that it has the power of choosing one at any time.

We have then seen that Gautama says that spirit formation is the necessary sequence of the immortality of soul. Rishi Kanada, the author of *Baishashika Darshana* explains the formation of spirit bodies after death.

Apasorpana, creeping out of the body of flesh and bone and creeping into a frame tinged with a golden or black hue and taking up a new function are the works of the invisible law.

"At death having crept out, (the soul) enters into another body again" (as explained by *Uposhakara Commentary*).³⁵

It is an admitted fact that there are two paths in the celestial sphere, northern and southern and the

³¹ Ibid., 14. 1. 4.

³² Ibid., 16. 1. 4.

³³ Ibid., 18. 1. 4.

³⁴ 18. 1. 2.

³⁵ Vide *Bhagabad Gita* in stanzas 23, 24, 25.

Hindu Sastras describe the spiritual existence under two phases, higher and lower and also treats transmigration as something exceptional. Transmigration is the lot of those who enter the black path, while continual progression belongs to those who enter the right path. Even those of the black path who are inclined to come back to the world, do not lose their personality by the change. They only forget their past experiences while on this earth, but then memory of the whole of their existence, is revived after the temporary sojourn on this earth.³⁷

Now by this time we have been able to review some of the important texts of ancient Hindu literature and show that the doctrine of re-birth was not contemplated in any of them. Moreover it would not be difficult to reconcile the important texts like the one in the Sreemad Bhagavad Gita, where Srikrishna is said to declare that the soul, after leaving one body takes another, just as a man gives up his old garment in order to take up a new one, with the doctrine of immortality of soul. We have already shown that by transmigration of soul, it does not necessarily mean another birth in this world, but on the other hand it means birth in another world in order to attain evolutionary progress.

The doctrine of re-birth is purely of Buddhistic origin and was incorporated in Hindu writings of later days. Even then it could not be the accepted doctrine of the Hindu in general and this is evident from the spirit communications that are extensively held by the Hindus, by the Tantriks specially.

These Tantriks do fix their operations for an opening for a knowledge of the spirit world just at the death of a man (with the dead body) and this is known as *Sab Sadhana*. This Sadhana is carried on with a view to ascertain that the spirit lives after death.

The general notion of Sapinda relationship so common to Hindu law and religion keeps up the tie of the dead and living persons. And we must not also belittle the great consequence that follows a Hindu Sraddha or Pitri Yagna, whereby the communication between the dead and the living is established beyond all shadow of doubt.

It would not be out of place to mention here the popular Hindu belief that by offering Pinda to the departed soul at Gaya, one releases them from all worldly bondage. The truth of it seems to lie in the fact that the free spirits seem to visit this particular place on account of its great sanctity, from time immemorial and whenever any information is conveyed to them of the newly departed soul, the free spirits take all the trouble of guiding them to their proper places.

All the popular stories that are told to prove the memory of a previous birth have got this redeeming feature in them that when a strong feeling of love happens to unite two parties, it also continues to be their binding force in all subsequent births, the husband remaining the husband and the wife the wife and so on. The stories can be explained away very easily as pure cases of obsession, where some other spirits good or bad have taken possession, both temporarily and permanently of the body and mind of the living person and makes him tell of all these miracles. We shall deal with cases of obsession in our next chapter.

Sati-rites were practised by the Hindu widows for a long time in the belief that they would thereby be able to reunite with their predeceased husbands in the after-world. If the doctrine of re-birth gained so great a popularity amongst the people of the land there would have been a natural aversion to this particular practice.

CHAPTER II

·POSSESSION AND OBSESSION

When the soul of a person enters or takes possession of the body of another, the latter is said to be obsessed or possessed. Such obsession or possession may be classed under two heads :

First, when the soul of a man who is alive leaves its own body in which it has been encased and enters the body of another person.

Secondly, when the disembodied soul of a man, who has departed this life enters the body of a living person.

The Soul of a Living Person Enters Another's Body

Treating of the first case first, the soul of a living person can leave his own body and sometimes enter the body of another in three different ways.

In the first place take dreams. While asleep we often dream of various things sometimes retaining distinct recollections of them and sometimes forgetting them altogether. It often happens that we dream of things we never thought of, but which turned out true. Take for instance, the incidents of a dream, that such and such a person died at such and such hour. On waking we find the news to be true. It might be comprehensible, if we had any previous knowledge of his illness. In the absence of such information it is inexplicable. Scientists and philosophers have been investigating into the matter, but so far they have not arrived at any satisfactory explanation as to how a knowledge of such incidents can be gained by a man, while he is sleeping. Spiritualists, however, are more definite about the matter. They are of opinion that the soul becomes disembodied during sleep, and gains a

knowledge of these happenings through its sixth sense. In support of this, they point to a number of incidents they have recorded.

In the second place, by the process of *Yoga*,—no new thing in India, its original home and where it has been zealously cultivated from by-gone ages—many seemingly strange things can be brought about and many so-called extraordinary powers can be acquired. Our ancient literature tells us of *Yogis* who could have their souls disembodied, or freed from the trammels of body, and in that state wander about and acquire a profounder knowledge of things of the earth and of other worlds. They could enter other bodies and come out of them at their pleasure. The *Puranas* mention many such instances. We read in the *Mahabharata* the story of Bidura. His body had become old and worn out, but for him it was of supreme importance that he should live for sometime longer. So what he did was to enter the body of Yudhisthira, unperceived by Yudisthira himself. Thus the soul of Bidura spent sometime in its new habitation and left it after its work on earth had been done. A close resemblance exists between the processes of *Yoga* and their results and those of spiritualism. This has impressed many and been admitted by them.

Let us treat of the third case. What is at the present day called hypnotism was very largely cultivated in ancient India and went by the name of *Vāshikaran-Vidya*. Through it, one person could exercise absolute control over the mind of another and cure diseases. The old *Damora* works treated of this branch of knowledge. It is, however, seldom cultivated now-a-days in India and many of the works on the subject have been lost or destroyed.

In recent times, in the west, Mesmer first experimented in France by a process by which one person can gain control over another. This was successful and came to be known as mesmerism, from the name of the man who invented it. Under it the soul of

the man mesmerised or under control could be freed from the body and directed to go anywhere or do anything the controller liked. In our country even now we come across some powerful *Yogis* or *Tantriks* possessing such powers.

To further illustrate our observations, we may mention the case of Madame Blavatsky, the great founder of the Theosophical Society, a woman of extraordinary genius. Her great scholarship, varied experience and penetrating intelligence are stamped on every page of those thoughtful works, "*Isis Unveiled*" and the "*Secret Doctrine*," among others. Those who came in contact with her, unanimously testify to her super-natural powers. She herself, however, declined to take any credit for these and openly avowed that some Mahatmas or great souls, living in the Himalayas, worked these miracles through her, whenever they pleased. "These great souls," she added, "do not appear in the society of men, but whenever need arises, they work through the body of a powerful person." As in the case of Madame Blavatsky, so in many other cases, as recorded in the Puranas, great souls worked miracles through the bodies of others.

In the books treating of the life of our Lord Gouranga, the Avatar of Nadia in Bengal, many incidents of such obsession or possession are also recorded. Let us relate one of these incidents here. Among the ardent devotees of the Lord Gouranga was a handsome-looking youngman named Nakul Brahmachari. After renouncing the world, when he was living at Puri, the Lord entered Nakul Brahmachari's body and through his agency, preached the cult of Bhakti in Bengal. One day suddenly, Nakul behaved strangely like one struck by malignant stars. He began to dance and sing, passionately entreated everyone he met to take the name of Krishna. It was soon noised abroad and the report spread far and wide that the Lord Gouranga had manifested himself in

Nakul's body. On hearing this, another of the Lord's devotees, Sivananda Sen, hastened to see him. He found such a compact crowd surrounding Nakul that he could not press his way through and standing on the outer fringe he mentally apostrophised the Lord :

"If Thou art really manifest in Nakul, then Thou shouldst know that Thy devotee has come to Thee; so deign to call him to Thee and tell him the sacred formula which was imparted to him at the time of his initiation."

No sooner thought than a number of men came forward shouting, "Where is Sivananda? The Lord calleth him." He went to the Brahmachari, made his obeisance and stood waiting. "Sivananda," said the Brahmachari, "you have come here to test me. Come here and bend your head" and the right mantram was whispered into his ear.

A Disembodied Spirit Enters into the Body of a Living Person

We have up to now mainly dealt with only one phase of obsession or possession,—that the spirit of a living man controlling another's body. We now proceed to a consideration of the other phase,—how a disembodied and departed spirit can take possession of a living man's body.

Most of us have heard of a spirit possessing or controlling the body of one sitting in a spiritual circle; some of us have seen it too. As a matter of fact, to these circles come spirits that have been called or invoked and, in some cases, those that have not been called or invoked. Between the medium (the owner of the body) and the spirit (the tenant in "possession" of the medium's body), there is no conflict, if the spirit happens to be of a higher order. If, on the other hand, it is one of the lower spirits, the medium is troubled over much and it is often a difficult task to drive it out or exorcise.

We have learnt from spirits themselves, through the mediums in these spiritual circles, much about the things of the world beyond. We have thus derived the information that many departed spirits cannot resist their attraction to the earth, and become intensely eager to see and hold communication with their near and dear ones in this life. Consumed by this burning desire, they get hold of the body of a living person to gratify themselves.

At the seances, it so happens that some of the spirits, when they come, begin to bewail loudly. Gradually they are soothed and pacified by the talk about the goodness and greatness of God held in the circle, and at the pure thoughts offered to them. Instances are also not rare of spirits asking their friends or relations to offer 'pindas' (oblation cakes) for the peace of their souls at Gaya. It has been found that spirits, who had been troubling their friends or relations, ceased troubling them, as soon as 'pindas' were offered at Gaya. The fact of the matter is that, it is a Hindu's firm belief that the progress of a departed soul is facilitated by the pinda offered at Gaya and with his death he carries with him this conviction or '*samaskara*'. We have already referred in our previous chapter as to the theory relating to the efficacy of offering pindas at Gaya.

To illustrate: A young man dies, leaving behind him his beloved wife. He keenly feels the pangs of separation in the spirit-world and longs for her company and is drawn towards her by an irresistible attraction and the result is, that his spirit hovers about the place where his wife is, trying in vain to make its presence known to her. It can enter but cannot stay in the body of his wife without her consent. If it succeeds in gaining the consent of the wife at last, it stays in the wife's body so long as it pleases and then goes to its own sphere. In the present book, such an incident has been related. It

occurred in the family of the medical officer, then in charge of the Hanumannagore Charitable Dispensary in the Bhagalpur district.

It need hardly be stated that this does not apply to the case of the husband alone. A wife, who passed away, leaving her husband and children behind, in some cases has been found to be profoundly affected, not so much for the separation from her dear ones, as at the thought of her husband marrying again. That a second wife will come and fill her place and use her ornaments or other things, is intolerable. In diverse ways, she tries to prevent the marriage, but failing in its attempts, sometimes it torments the co-wife and makes the husband's and his new wife's lives miserable. A number of these incidents find place in this volume

Yet another type of obsession. Sometimes it so happens that a man, gentle and sweet-tempered by nature, who seldom becomes obsessive, all on a sudden, gets irritated and annoyed for no ostensible reason. The loveliness of his countenance is gone, his eyes give forth flashes of fire and he roundly abuses anybody he comes across. The next moment, however, he is himself again, the gentleman known for suavity of manners. His memory is a perfect blank in regard to his unaccountable attitude the moment before and he himself is taken aback, if anybody mentions it to him. This too, as we have said, may be classed under obsession. A wicked spirit entered into and possessed the man's body just for a moment; but in its struggle with the inner being or spirit of the man, whose body it sought to control, it was worsted and driven out.

Let us consider another class of cases, by no means uncommon. Persons, who, while in this life, were addicted strongly to intoxicants or were of loose morals, still retain their craving after death, which becomes greatly intensified due to their having no

bodily form, as on this earth, and hence no means for gratifying their lust or their craving for intoxicants. They are overpowered with a desire to "possess" or control the body of a living man and work through his agency. It is, however, difficult for them, even to enter a man's body, much less to possess or control it. The inner being in man resists and resists most effectively such entry, even if efforts are made to force an entry. Persistent efforts on the part of these wicked spirits, sometimes, however, are crowned with success. As a matter of fact, even unconsciously, so far as the outer man is concerned, the struggle takes place and goes on between a wicked spirit seeking entrance into a man's body and the inner being within the body of a man resisting it. This struggle between the real owner of the body and the usurper continues till one is worsted. If the former wins, the intruder goes out, and all is well again. If, on the other hand, the owner of the body goes to the wall, the usurper rules, the former occupying a back seat in a corner of the body; as it often happens, the man untimely leaves his body.

The evil spirit remains in possession of the body and gratifies its cravings, as long as it is possible for it to stay on thus in the man's body. Truly speaking, the disembodied wicked spirit has become embodied again, and as the natural result of such embodiment, as everybody finds it practically, a new man works in the other man's body. The behaviour of the man, in outward appearance though the same man, is now different. The man behaves as the controlling spirit in possession behaves. If, however, the wicked spirit-usurper leaves the body after its lust has been gratified, or its craving satisfied, or, for some reason or other, the old dispossessed owner of the body, unless reduced to a hopeless state, asserts itself. What we outwardly notice then is that the

behaviour has again changed. The man has recovered, as we call it. He is this ownself again.¹

In such a state when a tussle goes on between the inner man and the usurper to be, it is usually supposed that the man is in the grip of some disease. Necessarily remedies are prescribed and applied, but no doctoring can cure the malady. An exorcist, however, succeeds in restoring the patient, where the doctor fails.

It is seen that spirit-possession more frequently occurs in women. The reason is not far to seek. Their power of resistance is weaker. This is also why they are so often the victims of hysteria and kindred ailments. It has been demonstrated that many hysteria cases are really cases of spirit-possession. The proper remedy is exorcism; a spirit of the lower order being usually in possession of the body to satisfy the desires it has not been able to conquer.

On occasions, a spirit of a higher order possesses a man's body. The possession or obsession in that case may be manifest only at times lasting for a few minutes only, or may be sustained. It is, however, essential that the man, whose body the spirit occupies, must be sufficiently powerful, otherwise, he cannot stand the possession and the higher spirit quickly departs. One thing is most marked and noticeable. So long as the higher spirit is in possession of the man's body, its effulgence is manifest outwardly, the dark room is illuminated and the surroundings are bathed in a genial light.

In the religious works of almost every nation, we read of such cases of obsession. The Lord Sree Krishna in the Geeta has said that the Lord God will become manifest and appear on earth, whenever sin prevails and virtue declines, to deliver the good and

¹ A very sensational and interesting obsession case, under the caption "A case of Re-incarnation from America", which reads like a romance, finds place in this volume.

to slay the wicked. God's spirit works through a human body and the whole theory of *Avatars* (Messiahs) rests on this manifestation, partial or whole, of the Universal Spirit. The Prophets of all faiths have referred in unequivocal language to their nearness to or oneness, with Divinity. It is undeniable that obsession is at the back of all these wonderful manifestations. Even a cursory reader of the life and teachings of Lord Gauranga cannot fail to be impressed with the fact that all the incidents in the life of our Lord are best explainable on this basis of obsession.

Sankarachariya Entered into the Body of a Dead King

Similar cases of obsession of class I, as described above, are also told in our *Shastras* and this undoubtedly establish the great antiquity of the theory. We find the following incident related in Sankara's Digbijoy by Vidyaranya.

Sankaracharya was anxious that Kumarila Bhatta should write a *vartika* on his *Saririk Sutra* and he felt very much disconcerted was when he heard that the latter was going to sacrifice his life by entering into fire. Sankaracharya rushed to the place, entreated Kumarila earnestly not to lay down his life and even offered to rejuvenate him; but Kumarila Bhatta said " . . . I have committed a great sin by preaching atheism, though I did not like it at all, then I entered the Buddhist monastery in disguise and learnt the Buddhistic doctrines there as one of the disciples; afterwards, I combated the Buddhistic doctrines and have successfully refuted them, thereby I have been guilty of treachery against my preceptor; so I am entering into the fire only to expiate my great sins." He further added "I would have been glad to write a *vartika* on your commentary, but unfortunately I am unable to do it. But I have got a disciple named Madana Misra, *alias* Viswarupa and Umbeka

(Ambeka). He is the spirit-incarnation of Brahma and more well-versed in the Mimamsa system of philosophy than myself. You should try to defeat him in a philosophical disputation and win him over as an exponent of your views. He would then write the *varatika* for you. In the debate Ubhay Bharati, the wife of Madana will be the referee. Her other name is Umba or Amba. The goddess Saraswati has been incarnated in her, owing to the curse of Rishi Durbasa." Sankaracharya went to Mahismatipur, the place of Madana, through air, by his psychic powers. It was the day of the *Sradh* ceremony of the Madana's father, where even great sages like Vyasa and Jaimini were personally present. Madana resented his presence and used opprobrious epithets to him for it was prohibited to see the face of a shaved person on the *Sradh* day. Sankara wanted to defend his action. Mandana consented and requested the great Rishis Vyasa and Jaimini to act as judges. But the latter directed that Ubhay Bharati should be the umpire and they retired. The discussion followed immediately. It was further agreed upon that the defeated party should acknowledge the conqueror as his preceptor. Ubhay Bharati put two garlands of flowers round the necks of both the contestants saying "He, whose garland faded first, would be declared defeated in the contest." After a long discussion, the flowers of the garland round the neck of Mandana faded and Ubhaya Bharati declared in Sankara's favour. Even the great Rishis like Vyasa and Jaimini came down and acknowledged the great merit of Sankara's philosophy. Upon this Mandana resolved to retire from the world. But then suddenly Ubhaya Bharati addressed Sankara and said, "Lord, you can not claim full victory yet. I am the better half of Mandana, so you can not gain absolute victory without defeating me, your victory will be only complete when you have defeated me." After holding a philosophical disputation continuously for 17 days, Ubhay Bharati understood that Sankara could

not be defeated in a religious and philosophical discussion; so she resorted to a trick—she invited Sankara to enter into a discussion on sexual science.

Sankara felt himself in a quandary. He was a life-long Brahmacharin (unmarried ascetic). Immediately after his student life he joined the order of ascetics, so he had no direct knowledge of sexual life. But he gained omniscience by his *yogic* power, so he could discuss the subject and meet Ubhay Bharati's points, but he thought "If I answer her, I shall lose in the estimation of the people as the subject is unworthy of discussion by an ascetic; on the other hand if I do not I shall lose the contest." So he thought the best way out was to keep the discussion in abeyance for a month; in the meantime he could obtain some personal knowledge on the subject. Ubhay Bharati had no objection to it.

But the difficulty was how to acquire the necessary knowledge which was opposed to his vow of abstinence as an ascetic, so he decided to change his body. As he was going with his disciples he came across the dead body of King Amaruka who had died while a hunting being carried along before him. Sankara said to his disciple Padmapada, "Lo, here is a chance. I can enter into the body of this dead King and can return to my own body after obtaining all necessary sexual knowledge through his body." Sanandana or Padmapada said "Lord, you are an omniscient being and as such nothing is new to you, and you must excuse me if my great regard for you does not permit me to look upon the idea favourably. In ancient times there was a *yogi*, Machihendra by name who also asked his disciple Gorakshaka to take care of his mortal frame so long as he remained absent in the body of a King. As soon as he entered into the body of the King by his psychic powers there was a marked change for the better in the King himself. His ministers recognised that some great soul had surely taken possession of the King's body and they

advised the queens to cast the spell of their charms over this new King so that he might not leave in a hurry. And Machhendra gradually forgot all about his great psychic powers being totally engrossed in dance music and other amusements and frivolities concocted by the ladies of the harem. While he was thus swept along in the current of worldly dissipations, Gorakshaka entered the palace as a dancer crying, "Wake up, Machhendra Nath, wake up" and gradually revived the lost psychic powers of his preceptor by bringing back to his mind the great eternal verities. So Lord, please do not take the risk. Sankara replied: "Our virtues and vices do not touch our soul, they only affect our gross senses. So one, who has realised the great self, who does not set any value on his own sense perception, is not subject to virtue and vice. And so God himself in His incarnation as Sri Krishna could not be tainted with any sin by his close association with the milk-maids of Brindaban."

"One who practices Bajrolilâyoga can not lose morally. So if I learn the sexual science even in this frame, I won't be committing any sin. But I would thereby set a bad example to others, therefore I am taking possession of another body." With this Sankara left his mortal frame in the cave, in charge of Padmapada and entered with his finer body into the dead body of the King by his psychic powers. At first he attenuated his *Prana Yayu* (vital air) and gradually drew it up from his great toe to the centre of his brain and then ejecting it made it enter the King's body through his great toe. Gradually the King revived. A thrill passed through his frame, his heart began to beat and then he opened his eyes. Thus Sankara took possession of the King's body.

With Sankara's entrance into the body of the King, the King seemed a quite different person. He was then found to be learned like Brihaspati in speech, like Yayati in self-sacrifice, valiant like Falgooni in

war and like Mahadeva in wisdom. There were also some super-normal phenomena which generally herald the birth or death of great persons. The King now carried on the administration with such conspicuous ability that the ministers recognised the change and conjectured that some great soul had entered into the dead body of the King. Sankara in the meantime enjoyed all the carnal delights in the body of the King. He also read Vatsayana's great treatise on sexual science and thus completed his knowledge.

In due time Padmapada went to remind Sankara that the time was up. Then Sankara left the body of the King and entered his own body. In the meantime the King's people insisted on burning Sankara's body but knowing him to be an ascetic he was spared by the grace of God. Thus equipped he came to Mandana Misra's place. Ubhaybharati knew everything beforehand and she acknowledged his superiority. Immediately she was freed from her accursed bondage and went to Brahmaloaka as the Goddess Saraswati. Mandana too acknowledged Sankara as his preceptor.

CHAPTER III

LORD GOURANGA—THE GREATEST PSYCHIC

Mahatma Sisir Kumar Ghose writes: "Lord Gouranga was the greatest psychic in the world." And who is Lord Gouranga? Madame Blavatsky mentions four Messiahs or Avatars who have appeared in this world. They are Krishna, Buddha, Jesus and Gouranga. She should have mentioned the name of Mohammed also. The word Messiah requires no explanation. The Messiahs are regarded as Beings who are part of God Himself or His

representatives who are specially deputed to this world from time to time for the spiritual uplift of men which is beyond the power of ordinary men to accomplish. In that book of books, the 'Bhagabat Geeta,' Sree Krishna declares that God Himself comes down, or sends His representatives, to different places on earth where vice prevails and virtue languishes. It is thus that there have been so many Messiahs in the world, and Madame Blavatsky mentions the names of the most important ones. The world knows something of the first three, namely, Krishna, Buddha and Jesus, as also of Mohammed, but it knows nothing or next to nothing of the last, Sree Gouranga, the Prophet of Nadia.

Now this last Avatar has a unique distinction. Jesus is worshipped as the Son of God, Mohammed as the Friend of God, but Gouranga is and was regarded by his devotees as God Himself, like Sree Krishna.

And who were these devotee disciples? not illiterate fishermen or peasants, not barbarous denizens of the desert, but the profoundest philosophers and towering intellects of the age who were also his contemporaries. Amongst others the names of Vasudeva Sarbavaum, the foremost scholar in the Nyaya philosophy, and Prabodhananda Saraswati, the greatest Vendantist of Benares, are well-known in India. They were at first sceptics and opponents of Gouranga, but ultimately became his followers and believed him to be the Lord Almighty Himself.

Gouranga or Nimai, as he was called in his infancy, was full twelve months in the womb and was born the biggest child that ever came out of a mother's womb. Diverse supernatural phenomena accompanied his birth. His parents, nurse and neighbours saw the babe, when only a few days old, surrounded by luminous figures hovering over him at night. At first they were very much frightened at such sights but

gradually they became accustomed. Sometimes they saw the babe encircled with a bright luminous aura. Words of the highest wisdom occasionally dropped from his lips, and then the child did not appear to be an infant of four, but a sage of supreme wisdom.

He was subject to fainting fits from the age of four, and his parents at first thought it was hysteria; but these fits did him no harm; with the return of consciousness he rose up a perfectly healthy child.

It was at the age of eight that he first told a wonderful story. He fainted away as usual and having regained his consciousness, said: "Listen, my parents, brother Visvarup came and asked me to salute you in his behalf, etc." The lad of eight also conveyed other messages from his brother, who was then dead. So, at the age of eight he was possessed by spirits, and some of them of a very high order.

When Gouranga was nine years of age, he was invested with the sacred thread of the Brahmins. As soon as his father whispered the sacred verses of initiation in his ear, Nimai (Gouranga) fainted away in the midst of a large number of people. When restored to consciousness, he was taken to a secluded room where he remained confined for the customary period. When the period of seclusion was over, friends and relations according to the rules, came to offer him alms or presents, among whom was a poor Brahmin gave him a nut which Nimai began to chew. While doing so, he called his mother to him, who was bewildered and frightened to find her son enveloped with a halo of powerful light. Awe-struck she stood before him trembling.

Addressing his mother with the greatest accents Gouranga said: "I am going now, leaving the body of your son. I shall come again. When I leave the body, he will appear as dead, but tend the body, with extreme care, and then your son will regain his senses."

When the spirit who possessed the body of the lad, had left him, and the halo which surrounded his head had disappeared, he fell down in a dead faint.¹ Then water was dashed into his face; he was fanned and loudly called by his name. At last he woke up with a start, no longer the supernal Being, but only a lad of nine!

We shall gradually show that many of the wonderful performances enacted by him are now being repeated by the best mediums of Europe and America but some of them are so marvellous that they almost border on the miraculous. His education was finished at the age of eighteen, when he fell into a deep trance, which lasted for several weeks. It was during this trance that he personated many dead persons remaining utterly unconscious all the time.

After continuing in this state for several weeks, he gradually recovered his senses, though not completely. He remained a plaything in the hands of the influence which controlled him for sometime. If he wanted to say something the influence stood in the way, and he was forced to say things against his will, in spite of his resistance. His individuality was effaced and he personated different people. He wept for hours. The weeping was accompanied by floods of tears which gushed forth from his eyes like water from a fountain, making the earth where they fell actually slushy.

It was soon perceived that, if one symptom appeared, the opposite was sure to follow. Thus the weeping was followed by laughter which continued for hours. Sweating was another of the symptoms, and

¹ This incident is recorded by Murari Gupta in his 'Notes' on the early life of Gouranga, and he dilates on the matter at some length. The following is a free translation of the 'slokas' regarding the incidents. "A stronger light than that of the rising sun emitted from and surrounded the body of young Nimai. Seeing this divine light surrounding his son, Sachee was terrified and bewildered. Nimai said to his mother, 'Mother, I am going. Take care of the unconscious body of your son.'"

thus says the author of the book, "Chaitanya Bhagabat":

"Whenever the Lord perspired,
Even Ganges' self seemed to flow from him."

The next moment it was succeeded by a complete drying up of his body which became so parched that it absorbed big pitchers of water. Sometimes there was violent shivering and chattering of teeth, and sometimes the body became so stiff that it seemed to be made of iron. Now the breathing was suspended altogether, then it became so strong that it seemed as if a storm was blowing. Again the body became so heavy that it could be lifted with great difficulty, and at times it became so light that even the weakest of his companions could easily lift him up in his arms, and sometimes even to such an extent that it was seen to float in the air.

During the last few years of his earthly life, when he remained mostly in a state of trance, he was kept confined in a room during the night, all the three doors of which remained closed. But occasionally it so happened that, though the doors remained barred from within and fastened from outside and the room itself surrounded by a separate wall, too high for any man to scale over, he came out in trance and was found lying either near the Lion Gate of the Temple of Puri or on the sea-shore or some other place.

At this time, sometimes he doubled himself up with his feet touching his head and spun round on the ground like a top. Sometimes his body was elongated and measured from $7\frac{1}{2}$ to $10\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length, and had the look of a giant of pre-historic age. At times his limbs were drawn in and he looked like a tortoise. Occasionally he was subject to such violent hiccoughs that he became quite restless. Not unoften his bright countenance became wan and pallid, again alternated between red and dark. Even the colour of his eyes shifted, exhibiting two different

tints at the same time, there being times when his hairs stood on end all over his body with berry-like pimples at their roots, from which blood oozed out.

We have given above an account of the external changes that were wrought in his person by this influence. But these external symptoms were also accompanied by still more extraordinary subjective developments. His soul was day by day drawn nearer to God; and gradually the highest angels, nay a Being higher than the highest angels, manifested Himself through him.

It was thus that Lord Gouranga was subjected to a severe psychical process. His mood underwent constant changes; he was now without God, he was again with God, and then God Himself. There was also another, his natural state, in which he was, like an ordinary man, the sweetest creature living.

One of the wonders which most impressed his followers was the strong light that emitted from his body when he attained to his Divine state. The light was so dazzling that the fiercest noon-day rays of the Indian sun in May paled before it.

We shall now narrate some Divine manifestations of Lord Gouranga which occurred just before his renunciation :

The first Divine manifestation took place when he was twenty-three. Sreebas, a very pious and learned Brahmin, and a friend of his father, was his only devoted admirer then. One day, in the forenoon of May, the hottest month of the year, when the sun was high up on the firmament, this pious and learned man was communing with God in his hut with closed door. Just then there was a knock and simultaneously a voice cried out, "Open the door." Needless to say, Sreebas felt very much disturbed and annoyed and asked, "Who is there calling?" in considerable acerbity. And the answer came : "He whom you are trying to commune with." Sreebas did

not like this blasphemous answer at all, even if uttered in joke, and he opened the door. But what did he find—a luminous figure stepping into his hut!

The radiant figure and Sreebas gazed at each other. What Sreebas saw paralyzed his senses. He saw a human figure charged, as it seemed to him, with a dense spiritual essence which emitted a dazzling light,—a light so dazzling that it dimmed the powerful rays of the mounting May sun, yet it did not hurt but rather soothed the eyes. There could be, however, no doubt, who the figure was,—it was the young Prophet who came to be subsequently worshipped by his devotees as an Avatar, the Lord Gouranga, the Prophet of Nadia. Sreebas was dumb in amazement; but the figure smiled and said, "Sreebas, you see I am come." This simple "I" explained who he was. The figure then sat on the cushioned throne, where the image of God was kept, and which being considered as the sacred throne of God, no Hindu would dare desecrate.

Sreebas stood speechless. He had then no doubt in his mind that the shining figure was God Almighty Himself and no one else. It was not only the effulgence with which the figure was covered that led him to that conclusion, but he found that it had filled every chink and cranny of his soul, and the belief, that the figure was God Himself, was firmly impressed on his mind.

When Sreebas had partially recovered from his stupor, he loudly proclaimed to the members of his family that God had at last appeared and they should come at once and see Him. When Sreebas made this announcement, there was no reason to disbelieve him as there was no question of his sanity; on the other-hand, his statement was accepted as true, without reservation, by all who heard him. As a matter of fact, the followers of Gouranga had been made to expect great things from his sayings and

doings. People knew that he had the power of converting a wicked man, by his merest wish in the twinkling of an eye, and so when Sreebas announced that the Lord God had come, it was received as a long-expected event. So they all ran towards the Thakur-ghar (house of worship) to see what the matter was.

Peering into the room they saw a luminous figure on the cushioned throne, and they were naturally stupefied in amazement. They gently shut the door and remained standing outside. To rouse them from their torpor, the illuminated Figure signified his desire for a bath. When they heard it, they ran to the market-place to purchase earthen pitchers to fetch water from the Ganges. One by one the followers of the Lord began to pour in. The Lord was inside the hut and none dared intrude into His presence. But they all saw a wonderful sight.

The worship-room (Thakur-ghar) of Sreebash, within which the Lord was seated, had mat-wall. Through the interstices of the wall, issued rays of light, which were distinctly visible from outside. They soon found out that the rays emanated from the body of the luminous figure within. Coming through the interstices, they did not lose themselves in the tropical rays of the Indian sun of May, but remained distinctly visible. Those who have any experience of this country, know how fierce are the rays of the May sun towards noon. For any light to be visible in such a light, it must be stronger than the sun. The early saints chronicle this event to give men an idea, how strong was the light that enveloped the person of the Lord.

When the pitchers—scores of them—had arrived filled with water, the Lord came out of the house for his bath. There were then hundreds of his followers present. And what did they see? They saw a figure of gold, coruscating as with “million lightning flashes,” issue forth from the room. The light that surrounded Him dimmed the mid-day sun of the

Indian May when He came outside. This is what one of the many authors, who were eye-witnesses to this spectacle, says: "When the Lord appeared, He was seen to be clothed in a garb woven with lightning, a million times condensed, and proportionately bright which dimmed the rays of the sun."

The Lord seated Himself on a large wooden seat in the open air, and when the pitchers were poured on His head the water which fell to the ground over His body scintillated, and as it flowed through the yard, it sparkled like a sheet of gold, studded with tiny specks of diamond. He was then led, at His own desire, to the sleeping apartment of Sreebas, the doors and windows of which were not only shut, but hung with screens to exclude light and heat from outside. As soon as He entered, the room was illuminated with flashes of lightning, which emanated from His body, and when He departed He left a luminous glow behind.

On the 'Maha-Prakash' or Great Revelation day, the Lord remained visible to the devotees for full twenty-one hours. On that day, after Gouranga had bathed, the Lord suddenly revealed Himself. This time also it was at the house of Sreebas, but there was a remarkable variation in the manner of his appearance, for now Gouranga, without losing his consciousness, as was usual with him, seated himself on the Vishnu throne within the house, as if it was the most natural thing for him to do. He ordered the devotees to chant hymns. There were screens on the doors and windows, but the room was lighted up by a mild effulgence from His body, so that it seemed bright like mid-summer noon.

Seated on a fine cushion, which was placed on the throne, not only did He cast off all His awfulness by His bewitching smile, but completely fascinated all by His indescribable loveliness. He, on whom the Lord bestowed His benign glance, felt His presence as much with his heart as with his eyes.

All such devotees felt that He was both within them and without.

Swimming in a sea of happiness, they betook themselves to worshipping Him, not only with material flowers, but also with a different kind of flower—the flower plucked from the very depths of their heart, the flower of LOVE. And what an overpowering love they felt for the lovely Being before them. They could then have died “a hundred thousand deaths” to satisfy His slightest wish.

On that day the door was open,—every one having free access to see the Lord. The devotees poured in from all sides, each bent on justifying his eyes by a sight of His divine person, each absorbed with the single idea of pouring out his soul at His feet—a soul throbbing with the pulsations of devotional fervour. “How good He is, how incomparably delectable is my Lord,”—thought every one in his heart, not only thought, but realized.

Hundreds of men and women showered flowers on His feet, threw garlands round His neck, reciting *mantras*, and repeating prayers all at the same time. Yet it was also orderly. All were absorbed in their work, oblivious of the presence of others. Every one thought that he and his Lord were alone in the room, and that he was looking at the Lord and the Lord was looking at him. No noise entered their ears though hundreds of persons were in the house. The union between souls was complete—the one was absorbed in the other. Yet they were separate, no merger—the God and His devotee, the Lord and the servant.

They addressed Him as Lord, Master, Krishna, and so forth, each in language which occurred to him. Some offered garlands saying, “I offer this garland of flowers to Thee; deign to wear it round Thy neck.” Thereupon the Lord takes out his own garland already on His neck, places it round the neck of the devotee, and then bending forward, allows the devotee

similarly to slip his round His neck. Some one happened to offer a silken cloth to the Lord. He graciously accepts it and gives His own cloth in exchange to him. In this way the devotees offered presents to the Lord and in return received presents from Him.

It is not altogether an easy affair for a man to personate God. Phosphorescent chemicals might go a great way towards producing effects of light like above, but it can not go the whole way towards making a God out of man. It may be possible for a man to throw a spell over another and hypnotise him for a time, but then to extort the consideration, which is due to the All-wise and All-powerful God, for any length of time, from hundreds, some of whom the most intelligent and learned man of the time, is a feat, which it is simply impossible for a human being to accomplish. They brought offerings to Him which would have appeased the hunger of hundreds. They all pressed the Lord to partake them; and He with a smile obliged them all, by consuming every thing that was offered to Him--a feat beyond the dreams of magic or legerdemain.

Thus passed the day, and night came on. It was now the time for *Arati* (worship with the waving of lights accompanied by incense and flower and ringing of bells) and it was performed by Sachee, the mother of the Lord, with the help of Malinee (Sreebas's wife) and others. As soon as her hands came in contact with the sacred feet of the Lord, Sachee found herself violently affected. A thrill passed through her frame and such was the exuberance of her joy that she began to dance. Now a dance by a Hindu matron of advanced years before spectators and strangers was an extremely unseemly sight according to the established canons of decorum and she was forcibly put down by Sreebas. Here another miracle was performed. Sachee knew not Sanskrit, yet she uttered the complet

from the Sreemat Bhagabat where Devakee offers her prayer to the new-born Krishna.

Then the Lord asked the devotees to approach Him. He held them all, one by one, in His arms and embraced them. In the Lord the devotees had at last found their soul's idol. The hours flew, in the blissful company of their Lord, with the speed of lightning and they were not conscious of the passage of time.

Now the Bhaktas felt that the sweetness of the Lord was overpowering them. They found themselves worn out; even the sweetness of the Lord was cloying and killing them inch by inch. So Advaita whispered to Sreebas: "Is it not time for Him to go now? I can't bear His presence any longer." "Neither can I", replied Sreebas. Then they took counsel of one another and they all agreed to address Him direct on the subject. Assuming a very humble attitude, they spoke to Him thus: "We are puny mortals, we cannot bear even Thy sweetness any longer, so deign to re-appear to us in Thy old form and relieve us of the puissance of Thy awful presence."

Twenty-one hours had elapsed since His first revelation in the morning at about eight, now it was nearly five o'clock in the evening following the next.

When the devotees had prayed Him to subdue His glory and appear to them as an ordinary man, He simply said, "Very well, I go," and instantly with a loud cry Gouranga fell down in a swoon. Thus ended what is called the Maha-Prakash or the Great Revelation.

All known methods were adopted to revive him, but without avail. A suspicion began to creep in that the Lord had left them altogether. Hope refused to cheer them. The trance had commenced at about five in the morning. For nine hours the body of the Lord remained in that state, apparently lifeless, yet it did not change colour, it looked as fresh as a living body.

At this time one of the devotees suggested, "Let us sing the song of *Kunjavanga* (the songs timed to be sung at the breaking up of the dalliance of the Divine Lovers—Radha and Krishna)—our last song on this earth—our swan song." The idea was eagerly taken up; and with the seemingly dead body of the Lord in their midst, they went circling round it softly singing the mournful melody. As they warmed up with the song they were conscious of a gleam of happiness shooting through their gloom of sorrow, for the music was celestial and it considerably soothed their heavy hearts.

Suddenly some one discovered signs of a mild horripilation in the body of Gouranga. This indicated that not only that life was not extinct, but the music was strongly appealing to his emotions. "He is here," exclaimed one, whereupon they all expressed their joy by shouts of "Haribole" (repeat the name of the Lord) and "Jây" (Hosanna). Peal after peal of Haribole went up from the throats of the devotees and rent the air, when Gouranga slowly opened his eyes and yawned.

His look, at first vacant, gradually recover its normal aspect. His eyes travelled over the faces of those present as if not quite certain who they were and why they were there. Finding himself lying prostrate, he sat up and found it was broad day light, and then endeavoured to collect his thoughts, where he was and how he came to be there. To make sure he asked languidly, "Well, what is the matter to-day?"

When Gouranga awoke from a trance, he always asked his friends to tell him what had happened to him; he retained nothing of what he said or did in his trance state.

One day Gouranga took his devotees by surprise by incontinently proposing to hold a dramatic performance: "Let us hold a dramatic representation"

said he "of a fragment Krishna's Leela (sports)." The devotees were curious to know what part of the Leela of Sree Krishna would be represented, and who were to take part in the performance. They also requested him to tell them beforehand how he had assigned the parts. In reply Gouranga said that it was not necessary; when the time came, every one would know the part he would be required to play.

The devotees still pressed, at least, to have some idea of the plan he had in his mind, but Gouranga replied that, when the time arrived, every one would not only know what part he would be required to play, but what to say and how to comport. "In short, friends," said he smiling, "you will then be like marionettes in the hands of a puppet-player; some one else will make you do whatever is necessary."

However, preparations were set on foot and the big courtyard of Chandra Shekhar, the maternal uncle of Gouranga, was converted into a stage. Then the performance began. First of all, Haridas, a devotee of Gouranga, appeared as the Kotwal (city constable) of Golok (the highest Heaven, the abode of Krishna). He invoked the blessings of Sree Krishna, so that the stage might be converted into a real Brindaban. While Haridas offered up his prayers, tears of joy rolled down his cheeks. The audience also were similarly moved. No wonder, as every one had gone there not for amusement, but for spiritual enjoyment.

Now Sreebas appeared as Narad with a 'Veena' (the best Indian stringed instrument) in his hand. The actual play commenced from here, and it began with something like a miracle. The audience had come to witness a dramatic performance. It was begun with the invocation of Sree Krishna and Radha, and a fervid prayer. This created a holy feeling in the minds of the audience. The feeling grew in intensity, by degrees, till the audience forgot that it was a

dramatic show. They felt that they were witnessing a real Leela (sport) of Sree Krishna. In answer to a question of the devotees, Gouranga had been pleased to tell them that they would need no re-hearsal, and that all those Divine figures who performed the Leela in Brindaban, would themselves come to their aid.

Thus Sreebas was taken entire possession of by Narad, the great saint. When he appeared in the latter's role, the audience had yet some vestige of consciousness left of their surroundings; for, Sachee, the mother of Gouranga, suspecting it was no real Narad but Sreebas, asked his wife, Malinee, who was sitting by her, whether or not her husband was acting the part of the saint. She, in reply, said, "It must be so, for they say it is he; but you can see, it is simply impossible for any one to recognize him in his present character as my husband."

Gradually both actors and audience became transported, and felt as if they were really in Brindaban. Sreebas forgot himself entirely and personated Narad to life, though the body was his. The audience also forgot that he was Sreebas and took him for no other than the saint himself.

Just then entered some Gopees (milkmaids) of Brindaban, with their chief, Lalita, who was represented by Gadadhar, one of the principal devotees of Sree Gouranga. At this time Narad left the place and entered Sree Krishna, represented by Advaita. He had a flute in his hands and looked like a tender youth. In reality Sree Krishna had entered into the body of Advaita, all his features underwent a complete transformation,—the old man of seventy-six looked like a callow youth; and what is more, his personal attractions enthralled all the spectators.

At last, Sree Radha and her maids made their appearance. Gouranga himself represented Radha. Before the commencement of the performance, Gouranga had playfully told Advaita, that he would

appear in the figure of a damsel of such ravishing beauty as would completely turn his old head. As a matter of fact, the entrance of the Lord created a feeling of wonder and admiration, and threw the entire audience into a state of indescribable rapture. He then looked like a woman of divine beauty; there was no trace of Nimai Pandit in his person, or any masculinity; even his voice had lost its virile character and became feminine and exquisitely sweet.

Sree Gouranga's appearance as Radha with her maids on the stage dazzled the audience. The procession seemed to be made up of celestial beings. All the maids looked exceedingly charming; Gadadhar, as Lalita, surpassing them all. But the Lord had promised to be the Mohinee, that is, "the enchantress," and he had really become so. His beauty bewitched both men and women.

Hitherto the audience had got only a glimpse of a part of Krishna Leela through the acting of the persons in their different roles but the real Leela began when Sree Krishna and Radha stood confronting each other—the You and I of Radha. That was a transcendently holy scene. None but the holiest of the holy are fit to witness it, and the audience, who had assembled at Chandra Sekhar's, were not worthy to behold it. That being so, just as Radha and Krishna stood face to face, all those who had come down from Goloka vanished.

It must be borne in mind, that Sree Krishna Himself had made use of the person of Advaita, Radha that of Gouranga, Lalita of Gadadhar and so on. Thus when Sree Krishna approached Radha, Sree Krishna left Advaita, and simple Advaita remained; Lalita left and there remained simple Gadadhar. Hitherto they were acting under some unseen influence, which unconsciously led them to do and say things of which they had no previous conception whatever; so when they were left free by Sree Krishna and the celestial band, they stood, dazed and stupefied.

When the Leela was over and Lord Gouranga went away, he left behind him wonderful evidence of his presence and of the dramatic performance held at the house of Chandra Shekhar. A light strong beyond the power of human eyes to stand filled the place for seven days and nights.

Murari Gupta, in his "Karcha" (Notes), Thakur Brindaban Das in his "Chaitanya Bhagabat", written under the inspiration of Nityananda, and Thakur Lochan Das in his "Chaitanya Mangal", written under the inspiration of Narahari, have all mentioned this incident.¹ Here it should be mentioned, that Murari, Nityananda and Narahari took part in the play. Kavi Karnapur, son of Sivananda Sen, a constant companion and earnest devotee of the Lord, explains in his 'Chaitanya Chandrodaya', how all this happened. Here is a free translation of the slokas as appear in that book, regarding the above incident :

"Mere dress could not completely effect the transformation as was done on that occasion. Of course, Advaita had the dress of Sree Krishna, but that could never make him resemble the real Sree Krishna. It was because Sree Krishna Himself had entered his body that this complete transformation was effected in the old man, so that he looked like the real Krishna. And when Sree Krishna left his body, though the dress remained, it was quite clear that he was no other than Advaita. Thus when heat enters cold water, the water becomes hot, and when the heat leaves it, the water becomes cold again. It was Sree Krishna, Radha and others who came to utilize the bodies of those who were acting the Dan-Leela, and

¹ The following is a free translation of the Sanskrit slokas in Murari's Notes : "When the Lord left the house of Chandra Shekhar, he left behind him in the house a cool luminosity which resembled the rays of the moon. This light remained in the house for seven days and nights continuously, and then gradually disappeared. The light looked like electricity as if the lightning of the heaven was playing upon earth. Its effect upon the eyes was such that no one could open them before it."

thus succeeded in giving the character of absolute reality to the whole thing."

We have already said that the highest spirits manifested themselves through Gouranga, and we have no doubt that God Almighty Himself sometimes took possession of his body and spoke to men through him.

Of course, this is a proposition not likely to be accepted by all, but spiritualists have no right to lay down how far men ought to believe and how far not to believe. Do not men of the highest position, men of science and of keen intellect, decline to believe in the manifestation of spirits at all? Yet we know that it is true; we are absolutely certain of it.

That Gouranga was possessed by God Himself was believed by his million followers of the highest position. And they had good reason for it; in fact, they could not resist it. First of all, we do not see how spiritualists can deny the possibility of such an event, namely, God Himself manifesting through a medium. Just consider: spiritualists believe that there are spirits; they believe that spirits possess some men, who are sensitive and are called mediums, to manifest themselves to men; they believe further that, generally the better the medium, the higher the spirits who manifest themselves through them, and lastly they believe that God Himself is a spirit. If that be so, wherein lies the absurdity of the statement that the great and good God manifested Himself through a medium, who was a perfect man, as certainly Lord Gouranga was. So we call him the greatest psychic.

It has been said that Buddha manifested through mediums. Christ did it, and so did Mohammad. Logically, therefore, there is nothing strange in the supposition that God also might have manifested Himself through some highly developed human organization. There are holy men who spend their lives in devotion; they say that there are times when they are

filled with the spirit of God, when they commune with Him. There are others, men of the highest purity, who have felt the presence of God in their hearts. But the world has never seen a being who had carried his spiritual exhalation to such a divine pitch as the Lord Gouranga had done. So there is little absurdity in the supposition that Gouranga was influenced by the God Himself.

The learned and holy men who chronicled his career, eye-witnesses and immediate followers, and men of the highest position declare that Gouranga had a perfect physical form of unearthly beauty, his purity was such that the like of it had never been witnessed in the world. The chroniclers of his life further say that when God Almighty entered his body he lost his consciousness, and that when this happened Gouranga fell down in a death-like swoon, and then he announced that he was the Lord of the Universe Who had come moved by compassion at the fallen condition of men, to advise and instruct them what they should do and how they should behave, to improve their spiritual nature. When Gouranga, in a state of trance, made this strange announcement, his followers did not treat it with ridicule or incredulity; on the other hand, he obtained such an absolute mastery over their hearts that they found it impossible to disbelieve him, and they took him at his word. These were called "Divine manifestations" by his followers and were frequently witnessed by them.

Now, is it an easy affair to play the part of God? Is it easy to act the part of God at all? But Gouranga did it, sometimes many times a day. Thus he fell down in a swoon, announced himself as God, talked with his followers for a time, and then disappeared. When, however, restored to consciousness by his followers, he could remember nothing of the part he had played. Is it possible for one to act the part of the God Almighty so often without being found out if he is a fraud?

CHAPTER IV

A CASE OF RE-INCARNATION FROM AMERICA

The thrilling story which we are going to narrate below, looks very much like a case of re-birth but it is not really so. At first it appeared in the 'New York Mercury' of September 13, 1851, and was next incorporated in the 'Morning Enquirer' only a few years back and presumably in some other respectable American papers too, and lastly in the 'Progressive Thinker' in its issue of September 16, 1911. Though the name of the writer of the article is not given, we are assured by all the papers noted above that it comes from an authentic source.

In 1850 and 1851 the writer worked at his trade, that of wool-carder, in Capt. William Wallace's woolen mills in the little village of Battle Creek, Michigan. Two miles from the village was a little lake, called Goguac. This lake was an ideal retreat for the lover of nature and a paradise for fishermen. The writer hunted its shores and fished in its placid waters. On one of Goguac's three islands was a log-cabin in which lived a strange character, who was almost unknown to the adjoining farmers. So manifest was his aversion to the intrusion of those who landed on the shores of his island-home that, it is doubtful whether any person had ever set foot on his hermit-habitation. An inquisitive farmer had once ascertained that his name was Stephen Strand and that he was an old sailor. No more did they know of his life-history. He lived by hunting, trapping and fishing. A dog and a monstrous black cat were his only companions. Had it not been for Strand's black cat, this story would never have been written.

One afternoon, while fishing on the lake, the writer rowed to the island to bail out his boat. As

he landed he heard most distressing caterwauls. Advancing through the underbrush with one oar in hand he discovered Strand's black cat in the coils of a big black snake. Strand came running on the scene just as the writer had finished the reptile with a stroke of the oar. If he had saved the life of a child no mother could have expressed more emotion and gratitude, than did Strand for the rescue of his cat.

Strand then invited the writer into his cabin. This was the beginning of a warm friendship between them. After that the writer frequently sought the place of retirement of Strand, and went fishing or hunting with him. The instinct of the writer as a hunter told him that there must be some interesting mystery connected with the life of the old man. The more the writer became acquainted with him, the more he became convinced of this fact. The curiosity of the writer had been fully aroused.

One day he went to the town, and Strand invited him to come that night and go out with him to engage in the fascinating sport of fish-spearing. That night their good luck so engrossed their attention that they did not notice the approach of a storm until it was upon them. They hurriedly rowed to shore and sought shelter in the cabin. The storm was a fearful one, and the electrical disturbance unusual. It lasted until after midnight, and it was then so late that he was obliged to stay with Strand until morning. The storm had a strange effect upon Strand. There was a look of terror upon his countenance, his body trembled, and he paced the cabin-floor in apparent anguish until its subsidence. During this time he never spoke. A feeling of uneasiness came over the writer which, as the hours passed in silence, increased to one of terror. A thousand thoughts came to his mind. His imagination was active. Could it be that Strand was insane? Or was this strange man subject to spells of madness? The writer thought that he was alone with him and at his mercy. Misgivings came thick

and fast, until the calming of the storm and with that came also a calm in the actions and feeling of the man. Just as the writer had begun to experience some degree of composure, he was again startled by the strange expression in Strand's eyes, which he rivetted upon the writer with an intensity that pierced the marrow in his bones. After great hesitation Strand said :

"I divine your thoughts. Do not be afraid of me. There is no human being on this earth that I regard as I do you. I have psychic powers. I have known your thoughts from our first acquaintance. Your impressions are correct. I have a strange story that no man has ever heard, but a strong impression has been with me for sometime past to tell it to you, as I know that you are my friend, that you will sympathize with me in my strange affliction, and not brand my words as the ravings of a madman."

Strand was greatly affected. Tears came to his eyes, and his body swayed backward and forward with emotion. He buried his face in his hands for some time. At last becoming calm he related to the writer his story.

"I was born in the town of B. Massachusetts. When 16 years of age I shipped on a whale-vessel, as a sailor. Serving four years, I returned, and, having had good luck, married a school-mate, who had been my sweetheart from boyhood. In order to be at home I adopted the fisherman's life and followed it for five years, when I again went before the mast in the merchant service. On a voyage from a port in France to Ireland, our ship was wrecked off the coast of Cornwall, England. It was night and the ship went to pieces on the rocks. There was an awful crash and the last thing that I remembered was falling in the water. When I became conscious I realized that my spirit, my real self, was out of his body."

He looked strangely at the writer and continued :

"It was a fact. I have passed through strange experiences. When I realized that I was disembodied, the impulse to live longer and not to depart from the world material came so strongly to me that I sought my body. I could not find it. I could not locate the material part of myself. On the shore lay the body of a man, who, with several other Frenchmen, had embarked with us from France and taken passage just for the novelty of a sailing voyage. I was determined to gain possession of that body. When I thought of my wife and children I could not leave this world. I was not prepared. I must come back. The Frenchman was coming to consciousness. My spirit contended with the spirit of that man for the body. This will seem improbable to you. A fight between spirits is something of which the material man can know nothing. It is a strange thing to contemplate. To describe it is impossible for the human tongue. It is not for the wildest imagination to picture the scene. While the struggle was going on, the body lying upon the sands of the sea was a frightful sight. With distorted features and writhings it rolled upon the shore like a person in great convulsions. I conquered, took possession of the body and drove the other spirit from its own earthly abode. The wail that the lost spirit sent up, as the last hope was gone of continued earthly existence, haunts me still, and his spirit seems to be ever with me. "Yes, the spirit of the Frenchman still haunts me," said he, "and on nights when storms prevail his lost spirit frequently strives to gain possession of his body again."

He confided to the writer that that was the reason he was so affected and terror-stricken whenever storms came on. He claimed that in his cabin he had several times had fierce contentions for the mastery of the body, but had always come out the victor. As he finished speaking he gazed strangely at his old black cat. Great heaven, as the writer looked into that

cat's eyes he could have sworn that human eyes were gazing at him, and his superstitions increased.

On one of the writer's visits the thought came to him to ask Strand if there was anything on the person of the body that he took possession of, the night that he was wrecked. He said that there were a number of letters in French, that he destroyed, and a pocket book and match-safe. The pocket-knife he had lost, the pocket book he had worn out. He still had the match-safe. He arose from his seat and, looking over an old bureau, found the match-safe, and handed it to him. It was gold, of exquisite design and workmanship. Upon it was engraved the name, "Jacob Beaumont." Strand made the writer a present of the match-safe, at the same time reminding the writer that he had promised to bring him a photograph of himself. This the writer did on his next visit.

Strand had told the writer that he was the only one of his ship's crew who survived, of how he reached Liverpool and shipped on a merchantman for the United States. In his new body he was like a man in a strange house. He was not at home. After a time, however, he became accustomed to his new physical habitation. When he arrived in Boston he specially sought his home in B——, where only sorrow, anguish and disappointment awaited him. He had not thought for one moment about his changed physical appearance. He met his boy and girl at his own gate, but they turned away from him in fright, at the familiar greetings of a stranger. They could not recognize him. Agitated and excited he met his wife and attempted to explain to her the cause of his changed appearance, but his strange talk and actions and still stranger story only made matters worse, and she turned away from him as from an unknown person. Indeed she thought that he had escaped from some asylum, and called upon the neighbours to eject him from her home; that home for

which his ardent love had caused him to steal another man's body, that he might return to it, and enjoy that love and happiness that had always been his.

He had told him how he finally broke away from that home, that he quitted the merchant service, and finally abandoned the sea and came to Goguac Lake and settled in his island-home.

Strand's story had excited the writer, as a matter of course; he had immediately written to the editor of the newspaper in B——, where he had claimed to live, to ascertain if a person by that name was known there. In due time the writer received a letter from the editor. He wrote that a man had once lived in that village by the name of Strand, that he was a sailor, and that he had been lost at sea. Once a man came to the village who impersonated Strand but was proven to be an imposter. He had left the place and was never heard of again. Mrs. Strand and family had left for the west some years ago to join a brother, who was well-to-do and who promised to support the children. Their whereabouts was then unknown. This information all the more aroused the writer's curiosity.

One year had passed since Strand related to the writer his strange tale, when one night a fearful electrical storm swept over the village. The writer was awakened from his slumbers by a seeming wild, unearthly shriek. The writer did not hear it again, so thought it must have been his imagination. The storm continued to rage and the writer rolled and tossed in the bed until morning, unable to sleep. The thought of Strand was in his mind all the time. In the morning he still thought of Strand. He continued to think of him and he determined to visit the lake. The writer had a foreboding that something was wrong. He rowed to the island, and entered the cabin, and everything was in disorder and topsyturvy. It looked as if there had been a struggle. He could find no trace of Strand. His dog came

crawling to him trembling like an aspen and convulsed with fear. An uncanny fear also seized the writer. The thought came to his mind, could it be possible that Strand had had another spiritual battle with the spirit of the Frenchman and lost? Could it be that the Frenchman's spirit had gained its own body again? The writer knew that these mental suggestions would not solve the mystery. The writer notified the neighbouring farmers of the mysterious disappearance of Strand. Of course, he did not tell them his strange history. All sorts of theories were advanced for his disappearance. The majority believed that he had been murdered by robbers, who thought that he might have money buried or hidden in his cabin, and his body sunk in the lake. As there was nothing disturbed underneath the floor nor missing from the premises, this theory was exploded, but notwithstanding this fact the farmers dragged the lake for several days. One mystery connected with Strand's disappearance was the like disappearance of that old black uncanny cat. No one ever saw the old black cat again. The writer had made several searches for the cat, but could not find her.

About this time the writer had a stroke of good luck. He was willed a thousand dollars by an uncle. It did not take him long to decide how to spend it. His most intimate friend Charley Bushnell had been in Paris for over a year studying art at the Academy. He wrote the writer such glowing descriptions of the country, the people and the pleasures of life in that city and had urged him so strongly to come over and "do" Europe and visit with him, that the writer determined to make the trip. The writer now had the money and would spend it in travel. Of course he would have a royal time in Paris.

One night they were invited out to a gathering of artists and literary people. Charley anticipated a delightful time, as there would be present a young French lady, an artist, of whom he had become

enamoured. What was the writer's humiliation when presented to her, and when his name was spoken, to see her faint. She would have fallen if Charley had not caught her. She was taken from the room and conveyed to her hotel in a carriage. The writer was perplexed and puzzled to know why his appearance should have such a distressing effect upon her. The next day a friend called upon Charley and requested that he at once bring the writer over to see Miss Beaumont, on a very important matter. It was the writer's turn to be startled, as for the first time he realized that her name was the same as that upon his mysterious match-safe, presented to him by Strand.

They had the meeting, and the outcome was another startling chapter in this strange story. To condense a long narrative: Miss Beaumont's father was Jacques Beaumont. He had left home many years ago on a sailing-vessel bound for an Irish port, and was never heard of until a few months before the writer's arrival in Paris. One day an old man came to the family home in the province of Q—and claimed to be the long missing Jacquis Beaumont. Miss Beaumont could not recognize him, so many years had passed. Although perfectly familiar with the family history, Mrs. Beaumont would not accept him as her long lost husband. He told a strange story of how he had been shipwrecked, how his body had been stolen by the spirit of another man, how he had hovered around the possessor of his material body for years, and repeatedly attempted to gain possession of the body and failed, but at last one night after making his last superhuman struggle had gained his own again, and animated by the desire to see his wife and daughter, had sought his home in sunny France.

It is not strange that the quiet villagers in this staid old French town thought him insane, and the officials took him to the asylum. The remarkable part of the story was that in the man's pocket was a photograph with the writer's name written upon the

back. When he was presented to her that night, she recognized him as the subject of the picture and when his name was given, she was overcome.

Mrs. Beaumont, Charley and the writer started that afternoon from her home. They called at once at the asylum, and the writer was ushered into the presence of the stranger, and sure enough it was Strand. The writer never had such a sensation in his life. But he was completely mystified and greatly astonished upon his refusal to recognise the writer. He insisted on talking French, and alleged that he could not speak English. He was breaking down fast, and his health was failing him. The writer visited him repeatedly, but never could get one word of recognition from him. He declared that he did not know him, and had never seen him before.

The old match-safe the writer had with him, and upon showing it to Mrs. Beaumont she instantly recognized it as one she had presented to her husband before he left home for his last voyage. It would take volumes to narrate all the thrilling events that transpired before the writer returned to America.

They returned to Paris. The story was made public, and the community took sides, some contending that the man was Beaumont and others that he was an imposter. As time passed the feeling became intensified and the quiet village that had known centuries of quiet and peace, was torn up with dissensions and quarrels over the identity of the stranger. For the sake of these good villagers, if for no other reason, all hoped that the mystery would be solved.

Several weeks had passed when the writer was notified by a telegram that the stranger would only live a few days. The writer in company with others left Paris in haste for the village. He found the excitement greater than ever, as the end approached, and that all business was suspended, and the people were congregated upon streets and in the tavern discussing the

mystery. The writer called at the hospital with the family and saw the man upon his death-bed. The writer endeavoured to have him acknowledge that he knew him, but would not. The parish priest was present. The man claimed to be a devout Catholic. This was another surprise, as Strand was an avowed free-thinker, and had always been very outspoken in his religious opinions. As death approached the priest bent over the bed and the sick man reverently kissed the cross. The priest asked him to reveal his identity. He was in the presence of death and his God. "Will you tell the truth? Are you Strand or are you Beaumont? Which?" The dying man revived for a time. He raised himself upon his elbow and rested his head in his hand. There was a suspense, and every ear was strained to catch his feeble words. He said: "I am dying and will tell the truth." His voice grew stronger and he spoke very distinctly: "In the presence of Almighty God and the sign of the cross, I swear the—"

The vital spark had fled. The man was dead.

CHAPTER V

OBSESSION CASES AND THEIR TREATMENTS

According to the sacred books of the Hindus there are seven *lokas* or places in the spiritual world viz., *Bhu*, *Bhuba*, *Swa*, *Jana*, *Maha*, *Tapa*, and *Satya*. These are scientific divisions; but for practical purposes we have divided the *lokas* into three only, viz., Hell, Hades, and Heaven. In Hell reside earth-bound souls; in Hades the souls of ordinary men; and in Heaven those of superior men.

Spirits in the higher spheres rarely come to communicate with mortals, unless they have some great object in view. Thus the high inspirations—intellec-

tual and religious—come from them. Spirits from the second sphere come only when they are summoned, or to serve mortals to whom they might be attached. Thus, they will give warning of danger, and sometimes even give information leading to the discovery of a lost article or the detection of crime.

Spirits from the lowest sphere, as a rule, come of their own accord. We say as a rule, for sometimes they too are summoned by those who deal in black magic. But as they are very much earthy, the other world does not suit them, and so they never let slip an opportunity of coming back to this earth whenever they find the door open, which, however, they do but rarely. Thus if one of these spirits find a medium, it enters his body slowly and gradually, and eventually it obtains complete mastery over it. And when it has done this, it refuses to leave it and makes it his home as did the old man to Sindabad in the Arabian Nights. And this is called demoniacal possession.

This demoniacal possession or obsession, though very dreadful to the victim, is of very great value to mankind. For, such cases completely establish the survival of man after death—a knowledge most precious to mankind.

Scientists like Crookes or careful investigators like Hodgson, may prove this truth in a scientific way after a great deal of research, trouble and ingenuity; but a case of obsession proves the survival after death at once and to the meanest intellect too. We have published in this book some well authenticated ghost stories. Who can, after such experience, refuse to believe in spirits and the moral government of the Universe? These obsessions also give mortals an opportunity of knowing something definite about the spirit-world.

The knowledge can be obtained in this manner. A man obsessed is nothing but the spirit of a dead man with a material body. Do you want to see a spirit walking amongst men?—then find out a man or woman

who is obsessed. Do you want to see a spirit face to face in broad day-light?—then find out a man who has been possessed by an earth-bound soul.

In spiritual circles spirits take possession of the faculties of the medium and come in contact with mortals. But these spirits, as a rule, cannot take complete possession of the faculties of their mediums; and the result is that the mind of the mediums asserts itself at times, so that the communications from the spirits become unreliable. And this is the reason why even good mediums commit mistakes, and often talk nonsense.

But in the case of obsession, the spirit obtains complete control of the faculties of his victim; and so obsession means practically a spirit among men on earth. One of the most wonderful cases on record is that of Rancy Vennum and Mary Roff. This case is certified to as true by Prof. James, Dr. Hodgson and Dr. Peebles. It occurred in Watseka and was seen by a large number of people. The case is known as "Watsaka Wonders." We have published a detailed account of this incident in this book.

Obsession Hospitals in Southern India

These obsession cases are so common in India that hospitals have been established in this country solely for the cure of obsessed persons. Among Hindus the opinion prevails that an earth-bound soul can be liberated by the help of men below. So, when dead, it tries to find a medium to communicate its condition and wishes to friends. If it has no such friends, it makes itself disagreeable in various ways, so that the victims try, for their own sake, to liberate the soul itself from bondage. Thus it is, that cases of obsession are so frequent in India.

When Dr. Peebles came to India the first time, he made enquiries about some of these hospitals. These institutions are more frequent in Southern India.

Thus, in Dr. Peeble's work on "Spirit Obsessions" he writes :

"There is a small temple at Dattatrya, on the confluence of the Krishna and the Punch Ganga. I saw several obsessed persons there. The place is very famous for curing people suffering from obsession. There are various Saivite and Vishnubite temples which are famed for relieving persons from obsessing pichases (earth-bound souls)." "The informant", writes Dr. Peebles, "saw a score of times the phenomenon at the Hanumanta and Durga Temples. And his wife saw the same thing at the Madura Temple."

Regarding these obsession hospitals a friend writes :

"Formerly I had no knowledge of their existence. But I went to Konkan in Southern India for the purpose of collecting materials for a life of Sivaji. I happened to visit a beautiful place situated on the shores of the Arabian Sea. Besides the place being considered a sanitarium, it contains a celebrated temple, so every morning a vessel leaves Bombay for it. My object was to see the principal fort of Sivaji at Raigarh, and while there, I heard the fame of the temple of Hari-Hareshwar."

Our friend continues :

"In course of conversation, my host informed me that a very interesting Brahmin ghost had made his appearance in the temple. I could not at first understand what he meant, but he informed me that people obsessed were brought to the temple of Hari-Hareshwar for cure, and they were almost invariably relieved of their "possessions." Hearing this I lost no time in paying a visit to the temple. My curiosity was soon satisfied. After the worship of the image had been finished, the patients were brought forward. They were made to sit in a row, and the priest brought holy ashes and sprinkled them on the persons of the obsessed. The effect was instantaneous,—some swooned away, some fell down as dead, others shouted, while still others began to shew the anguish of their soul in various ways. But a woman among them attracted my attention as also of other spectators. She was repeating the Vedas. First, a woman is prohibited from reading the Vedas. Secondly, she belonged to a very low caste and was also illiterate. The Vedas are only accessible to the highest and most learned Brahmins. As I knew Sanskrit, I could understand what she said, and I was, I assure you, enthralled by the spectacle of a low caste woman, perfectly illiterate, repeating the Vedas. But my

attention was soon distracted by the howlings of another woman. It appeared to me that she was possessed by perhaps the most ferocious ghost in existence, whose object was evidently the destruction of the world. He was making disagreeable in every way and trying to frighten every one. The priest accosted this terrible soul and asked his name ; but he refused point-blank. Thereupon, the priest left him to return to the image, and prayed awhile for help. Returning to the woman he commanded the ghost, who possessed her, to come to the post. This time the ghost perhaps found himself unable to disobey, for he came humbly to the post. The priest then ordered some invisible spirits, who evidently attended upon the Diety, to tie the hands of the woman to the post. But though no chain was visible, nor any spirit, the possessed woman twined her hands round the post as if she was being tied by others. It looked as if the attendant spirits had heard the command of the priest and tied the woman's hands to the post with an invisible chain. The priest next ordered the spirits to thrash the ghost soundly ; and though nobody saw anything, it appeared that some invisible hands were really applying an invisible birch on the back of the ghost or rather the woman, as every stroke was being followed by a piercing shriek from the woman, that is, the evil spirit who possessed her, till at last the latter prayed for mercy. He was forgiven and the woman relieved of her tormentor."

Now it appears that every such hospital is in charge of some guardian spirits, who evidently were, when on earth, votaries of the Diety in the temple. Their work lies in helping the priest to exorcise ghosts. The exorcising means not only the relief of the possessed patients, but also the liberation of the earth-bound soul who possess them. Their object then in obsessing persons generally is that by this means they might be brought to the temple and helped by the attendant spirits in being liberated from their bondage.

The friend continues :—

"I saw the woman, who repeated the Vedas, at her lodgings when I heard that she had almost given up her food. Ordinarily she talked to herself, but occasionally a Brahmin spirit repeated the Vedas through her. This Brahmin spirit at last quitted her."

Other Indian Methods of Exorcising Ghosts

We have shown above how obsession cases are cured in the 'Obsession Hospitals' in Southern India. But there are other methods of treatment in India. In our part of the country, there is a class of men called *ojhas* or ghost-doctors. The late Dr. Preo Nath Nandi, a medical practitioner of Calcutta, elaborately narrated the mode of treatment as followed by these *ojhas* or ghost-doctors in exorcising ghosts. It will appear from the account, published below, how Dr. Nandi, who was a stubborn disbeliever in everything occult, at last became a firm believer in it.

Babu Ram Gopal Nundi was an inhabitant of village Salpa-Bahir-Dia, in the district of Khulna, Bengal. He and Dr. Nandi came from the same stock and their houses were in the same compound. It was one day in the year 1878, that the wife of Ram Gopal Babu, then aged 16 or 17, began to show symptoms usually associated with hysteria; her body grew rigid with her teeth locked, and she began to fling out her arms and legs convulsively. Dr. Nandi, being a medical man, thought it to be a genuine case of hysteria and gave her Bromide of Potassium, Valeriate of Ammonia, Assafoetida, etc. But these medicines seemed to have no effect on the patient. The members of the household and their neighbours thereupon declared it to be a case of obsession.

A number of *ojhas* or ghost-doctors were called, and the patient was ultimately placed absolutely in the hands of one, who treated her for a long time. Dr. Nandi had thus an opportunity of studying their methods of treatment most closely.

Dr. Nandi wrote: "Now, I should like to describe the *modus operandi* of the *ojhas* in this part of the country, because they have reference to the story to

be narrated by me. The chief among them are the following :

Dhup-pará, (charmed resin).—A torch is first prepared by winding a piece of long-cloth dipped in oil round a wooden stick. The *ojha* after lighting it holds it up by his left hand and then taking handfuls of powdered resin with the other hand throws them at the patient through the flame of the torch. While doing this he utters *mantrams* or incantations. The resin falls on the body of the patient like sparks of fire, but they do not cause any injury either to the skin or dress.

Sarisá-bán, (shooting charmed mustard-seeds). An earthen lamp with mustard-oil and a wick is prepared. The *ojha* utters *mantrams* on the lamp after bringing it close to his lips. After a while the *ojha* declares that the burning power of the lamp has been subdued. Then spreading his thumb with mustard seeds which stick to it for being soaked in mustard-oil, he points it slant-wise over the flame towards the patient. The mustard-seeds begin to explode and some of them fly at the patient, the *ojha*, uttering his *mantrams* all the time. The patient is so placed near the flame that the hot mustard seeds might easily fall on his body.

Rám-bán, (shooting mantra-ized arrow).—A bow is prepared with thread and cocoanut-leafstick. Another stick is taken as the arrow, one end of which is twisted round with an oily cloth. The patient is then made to sit on a wooden seat and a metallic plate is pressed tight against his back. The *ojha* thereupon recites his *mantrams* and lets fly the blazing arrow on the disc from his bow.

Chun-pará, (mantra-ized lime).—A lump of ordinary slaked lime is taken. The *ojha* after destroying its caustic power by his *mantras* puts it into his mouth and then spits it out at the patient.

Máti-pará, (mantra-ized earth). Some dry earth dug out by rats is procured which is mantra-ized and thrown at the patient.

Sarisá-pará, (manta-ized mustard-seeds). Some mustard-seeds are magnetized and the patient is pelted with them.

Mochore, (twisting).—The word signifies that the ghost is being wrenched out of the body of the patient). At first cloth about 10 cubits long is twisted while the *ojha* gazing intently at the patient goes on reciting his *mantrams*. Then it is doubled and twisted again with force.

Bali, (sacrifice).—It is done after the manner as goats and other animals are sacrificed according to Hindu method. The *ojha* kneels down, as a man does when sacrificing a goat, holds tightly a sharp weapon and strikes at the bare ground uttering mantrams.

Chápar, (slapping).—The *ojha* utters his mantrams and forcibly slaps on the ground as if by virtue of the mantrams these blows are transferred to the ethereal body of the spirit.

Parwáná, (proclamation or mandate).—On many occasions the *ojhas* send out written chits to the possessed containing mandates. These notices are read out to the possessed. The purpose of a parwana is not always clearly defined. They are written in unintelligible and meaningless phrases and meant to be understood only by the party for whom they are meant.

Similar processes are also found described in 'Bhut Damar', a most reliable treatise on Tantra philosophy,—a part of which is devoted to occult science in all its branches."

When the wife of Ram Gopal was placed before the ghost-doctors of the village, they, after a close examination, emphatically declared, that the lady was acting in that strange manner not on account of hysteria or any other disease, but because a spirit had taken possession of her body and was troubling her.

But the local *ojhas* failed to do her any good after repeated trials. The guardians of the lady had then to send for a ghost-doctor of great repute, named Kedar Nath Banerjee, who lived in the adjacent village of Piljang. A Mahomedan, named Jan Mahmud Sheikh, was sent to bring the ghost-doctor. This matter was kept secret from every body.

At 4 P.M. of that day, the lady was seized with the usual symptoms of her disease, but in an aggravated form. Her face assumed a demoniac and terrible look. And the strangest part of the whole affair was that she now began to cry out, threateningly pointing to her husband, "Whom have you sent for to-day?" This prevision on her part exceedingly surprised all. Her mania increased with the decline of day

The fact was, as it was ascertained afterwards, that the above symptoms of the strange disease began to manifest themselves in her at exactly the same time (that is, at about 4 P.M.) that the *ojha* was informed of the case and was making arrangements to start for their house. And as he came near and nearer, she became more and more restless and furious. Thus, in the evening, when her disease had increased ten-fold, she suddenly turned towards Dr. Nandi and demanded of him that she must have some medicine. Something curious was observed in her. She always resented if anybody declared her to be possessed by spirits, and pleased with those who were of opinion that she was suffering from hysteria or any such ailment. It was for this, that Dr. Nandi was in her good graces and, being repeatedly entreated, he gave her two doses of Bromide of Potassium, 20 grains a dose, commencing from 4 o'clock. But, in the evening, when her condition became the worst possible and appeared to be rather peculiar, he declined to give her any more medicine, though she demanded it in an authoritative manner. On this, she grew highly incensed and thundered forth, "I would wring your neck and drink your blood." Before he could speak anything in reply, she darted at the doctor and attacked him with all her might. The doctor had then no option left but to defend himself and he was surprised to find, that, though quite a strong man, he could not extricate himself from her demoniac clutches. Dr. Nandi was noted for his physical strength in the village, and, though he tried his utmost, he could not resist her onslaught.

A large concourse of people had, by this time, gathered round the house; and when they found Dr. Nandi in this strange predicament, many of them quietly slipped away to save their own skin as they were afraid of a similar attack on them. They were not a little surprised to find a Hindu girl of 16 conducting herself in such a queer way. But a fresh

sensation diverted their attention now. She left the doctor of her own accord and began to utter words of threat in this manner: "I will teach rascally Jan such a lesson that he will never forget." Then turning to her husband she said: "Whom have you sent for through him?" It has been said before that the husband of the lady had sent one Jan Mahmud Sheikh to call the well-known *ojha*, Kedar Nath. This fact was not known to any other person except Dr. Nandi, the husband of the lady and Jan Mahmud, who, it was ascertained afterwards, had communicated the matter to none else except *ojha*. So it was a matter of surprise to find that, not only the fact of the *ojha* having been sent for had been discovered by the patient, but she could also tell the name of the man who was deputed for the purpose.

When, however, the attitude of the girl became beyond endurance and violent in the extreme, and she began to create a good deal of noise, Dr. Nandi with the help of her husband, forced her to lie down on her back and kept her there by pressing down her arms and legs with all their might. The patient now gave up attempt all to extricate herself and began to moan with ejaculations such as "Oh, Oh, Ah, Alas." In fact, she made all sorts of inarticulate sounds and began to raise her voice to a high pitch and appeared as if she was expecting something to happen presently. At first, they could not account for this sudden change, but presently a boy of the house, named Gobinda, came to the patient with a *parwana* (mandate) from the *ojha* who had come a little while before. It was then ascertained that, when the patient had become most boistrous and was crying the loudest, it was exactly at that time that the *ojha* had reached the house and taken his position in an outer detached room which was about 30 yds. distant from the room in which the patient was held down on her back. These two rooms were so far apart from each other that anybody talking in one could not be heard in the other;

so that when the *ojha* came and sent his *parwana* from the outer room, it was quite unknown to those who were in the patient's room.

Now, Govinda brought the *parwana* and tried to read it out, so that she might hear it. But she would not hear and with that intent she began to cry so loudly that not a word of the *parwana* could be heard. Another man now stepped forward and gagged her mouth, while a third read out the *parwana* at the top of his voice. As stated before the *parwana* contained meaningless jargon. The only one sentence intelligible to them, when translated, read like the following: "Thou livest on the bank of the river whereto thou shalt go." Its effect was, however, magical. She was subdued completely and became quiet as a lamb. She shut her mouth, her limbs were relaxed and she appeared to be lifeless altogether. Her condition alarmed Dr. Nandi and he felt her pulse which had practically ceased to beat, though a little after a slow beating was perceived. They could not feel for certain whether she was breathing or not. In a word, from the condition of her body it seemed that her life was extinct, only *rigor mortis*, or the stiffness resulting after death had not set in. This happened at 8 o'clock at night. Her husband and others were very much alarmed and immediately sent for the *ojha* to the room.

The *ojha* came, but after examining the patient, did not show any anxiety, and, asking the inmates of the house to wait for a while, took his position in the verandah attached to the room, as if for the purpose of talking a little more rest, because he had to walk about 5 miles and had perhaps to settle his plan of action. After a short time, he commenced his operations. His second procedure was as follows:

According to the advice of the *ojha*, the lady was placed on a wooden seat in front of the door leading to the verandah, and, as her body was still very much relaxed, she had to be supported on both sides to make

her sit up. Two bright lamps were placed on either side of her for examining her closely. At that time there were four persons in the room, viz., the husband of the girl, her mother-in-law, her sister-in-law and the doctor. The *ojha* took his seat on the verandah in front of the door, and taking pinches of earth began to throw them at the patient, after magnetising them. All her muscles were in a state of relaxation, so much so, that her head was seen hanging loosely on one side. But, even in this condition, her face beamed with a smile. Slowly, however, she gained in strength and assumed an attitude of defiance.

The girl, who had been at the point of death a moment before, now became suddenly exceedingly violent, and the whole thing appeared to us to be a bit queer. She now began to abuse the *ojha* most violently. For a Hindu wife of that age, belonging to a respectable family, abusing an unknown person in that way, was in itself an unusual thing. She was not only abusing the *ojha*, but imitating him she dug up earth with her nails and threw it at the *ojha*, as if to neutralize the effect of the *mantrams* uttered by the latter or to make fun of his methods. When the *ojha* failed to produce any effect by continuing this *māti-parā* process for about an hour, he took to the mustard-seed process and continued it for another hour. This too seemed to produce no effect on the girl; on the other hand, she began to be more and more violent. The *ojha* then declared in whispers that the ghost, that had taken possession of her body, was very powerful and could only be dislodged after a good deal of trouble. For this purpose, it was necessary to compel her to take a seat in the courtyard by virtue of his *mantrams*; and, telling all present to let go their hold of her, asked them to place a wooden seat there. All this was done apparently outside the hearing of the girl.

The *ojha* now began to utter loudly *mantrams* of various sorts, most of which were composed in Sanskrit. They seemed to exert some influence upon

the patient. However, the doctor failed to bring her to the wooden seat, though he tried for half an hour. She, on the otherhand, kept on abusing the *ojha* and began to play other pranks. It was exceedingly surprising to find that in the midst of her angry vituperations she was disclosing facts regarding the *ojha* unknown to those present. First, she said that the *ojha* was a Brahmin; secondly, that he was a widower; and last, that he had three sons.

When, however, the above *mantrams* of the *ojha* failed to produce any effect, he took to his *morchore-mantrams*. He, at first, availed himself of those to be found in the 'Blut Damar' of the Tantra philosophy. They too having failed he began to recite *mantrams* of another type with a mixture of Arabic and Bengali. At this time the girl appeared to be a little subdued; and the *ojha* said that now she would be compelled to take the seat placed in the courtyard for her.

She suddenly rushed out of the room with electric speed clearing the verandah, and, with big jump, dropped on the courtyard and sat on the wooden seat. The verandah was about a man's length in height. Dr. Nandi and the husband of the girl followed her quickly to the courtyard. Some amusement was caused in connection with this affair. A man, beside the ghost-doctor, was sitting on the verandah. Both of them fell flat on the ground on their backs when the girl rushed out with great force. They said that they had been kicked by the girl when she passed.

Now, this girl was all along acting like a stark maniac. She did not arrange her cloths as carefully as a Hindu woman should do, the more so before strangers. She abused the *ojha* in a torrent of inactives, though ordinarily she was exceedingly modest in her behaviour. She played other pranks which shewed that she was not in her senses. The manner in which she cleared the verandah surprised

them all. But though insane as the wife of Ram Gopal, she was perfectly sane as a mischievous demon. She took delight in thwarting the people at every step.

When the *ojha* succeeded in compelling her to go to the seat placed for her, he found a little respite and declared that the case was hopeful. He took his *hookah* and quietly smoked for about 10 minutes. He commenced operations again and at last succeeded in expelling the ghost at 4 A.M. It was after continuous effort for a whole night that the mischievous spirit was compelled to confess defeat and agree to leave his victim.

The *ojha* then began to ask questions. In reply to the question as to who he was, he said that he was one Uma Charan Bose. He also said that he lived at the end of the village and had died of cholera. The *ojha* then wanted to know, how he could prove that he was actually Uma Charan Bose and no other. In reply to this, he at first indulged in foolish twaddle, but afterwards revealed facts regarding himself (Uma Charan) which had not been known to others. They were found to be correct by the villagers. This created immense sensation in the village.

The girl at last said, pointing to the *ojha*, "I shall go now; I was very happy here; but when you compel me to go away I will not remain in this village at all." The *ojha* replied, "How am I to know that you are going to leave this place? Better snap that big branch of yonder mangoe tree when you go." That is one of the ways by which earth-bound souls prove that they are quitting the body they have possessed. The ghost however said, that he could not do it. The fact is, the ghost was taking his own time to vacate the body; he tried to remain as long as he could. It was thereafter settled after a good deal of wrangling that as he could not snap the branch, he must carry a big earthen pitcher full of water with his teeth, in an erect posture, seven steps forward, and

then, throwing the girl on the ground on her left side, would depart. This was what actually happened and the patient, though a frail girl of 16, lifted a large pitcher full of water which weighed not less than a maund (about eighty pounds) with her teeth and carried it with an ease which created surprise. But instead of proceeding seven steps, she went only five steps and dropped down completely senseless on her right side and not on her left and the earthen pitcher shattered to pieces. After remaining senseless for about 10 minutes she awoke as if from a long sleep.

The *ojha* was not satisfied. He was of opinion that the ghost had not been completely controlled; for, in that case the patient would have gone seven steps instead of five and fallen on her left side. But to all appearances, however, she seemed all right for the time being.

It was soon perceived that though the ghost-doctor had succeeded in expelling the mischievous spirit who called himself Uma Charan, he could not altogether free her of the influence of lower spirits from the other world. What happened was this. Uma Charan had developed in her mediumistic powers, and these powers remained, though he himself was expelled. But the ghost-doctor succeeded in obtaining a good deal of control over her. He was induced to stay there till she recovered completely. The lady remained inside, and the *ojha* outside. Whenever the lady shewed symptoms of possession by a spirit, the *ojha* was immediately informed and the patient became calm, though she was far away from the *ojha* in the inner apartment, and not in a position to know what he was doing.

One day she began to cry and the tone was so plaintive, so heart-rending, that all those who heard her could not help shedding tears with her in sympathy. "Who are you?" "Why do you weep?" "What is your trouble?"—these were the questions asked of the spirit who had possessed her. For some-

time, no reply came ; at last the spirit vouchsafed one. He said, he was only a boy and in this manner, gave an account of how he had been carried to the spirit-world before his time.

The lady, though illiterate, was found to have improved her mental faculties exceedingly because of these possessions. With the advice of the *ojha* we induced her to learn and recite religious hymns in Sanskrit. We were surprised to find that, though not conversant with Sanskrit at all, she could then recite the hymns quite easily even when they had been told to her only once or twice. She again began to show symptoms of her former disease on the 16th day of her first cure.

Ganga Moira, the Foremost Exorcist of Bengal

Gangadhar Modak, popularly known as 'Ganga Moira,' was the foremost *ojha* or exorcist in Bengal some seventy years back. He was an inhabitant of Naihati in the district of 24-Parganas. The gift descended to him from his father, Ram Ram Modak. There is a story current in the family, that this Ram Ram Modak or Moira came across a *yogee*, who finding him a fit person, taught him how to cure certain incurable diseases, to treat people bitten by poisonous snakes, and to exorcise ghosts.

Ganga Moira could not only exorcise ghosts but was a powerful medium as well. He had his "controls," with whom he could hold direct converse, and bring through their agency fruits etc. from Kabul or any such distant places in half-an-hour or uproot a tree in the presence of witnesses. Whenever he held a seance he was besieged with sceptics, who called him a humbug who could only convince ignorant rustics. On such occasions Ganga Moira would make his ghosts convince the scoffers that they (ghosts) did really exist. We

publish below an account of an exorcism, done by him :

Babu Girish Chandra Roy, of 8, Hogulkuria, North Calcutta, a highly respectable gentleman, described to us a few decades back what he had heard of the account of a spiritual seance by Ganga Moira, from those who had taken part in it, namely, his uncles, Babus Troyloksha Nath Roy, Kalidas Roy and Bhuban Mohan Mitra. The seance was held in the *Baitakkhana* (drawing room) of the Mitras at Kanchrapara, and there were present various people. As soon as the lights were put out, a loud report was heard from the terrace. A little while after, Babu Kali Das Roy was struck in the face. The spirit then began to talk. He said, "There are scoffers present here who have no faith in the existence of spirits. I will wring their necks and convince them." The medium (Ganga Moira), who was not entranced, opposed this idea with the suggestion that the spirit should convince them by a gentler method. The ghost then said, "Very well, let me know if you want anything." One said, "Let us have Kamranga" (*Averrhoa Carambola*), which is a sour fruit. Soon after this was said, every one of the hundred men or so present, found a Kamranga in his hand. It must be borne in mind, that there was no Kamranga tree there, except one which was about a mile and a half from the house where the seance was being held.

This occult power, which Ganga Moira possessed, descended to his son, who was an equally celebrated exorcist; and his grandson, Benode Behari Modak (Moira), was in no way inferior to his father or grandfather. We know of one case which was treated by him very tactfully in which at last he was able to exorcise the ghost. We give an account of it below :

One day, about thirty years ago a compositor of our Amrita Bazar Patrika Press sent for Benode for the purpose of treating his wife who was supposed to be either suffering from hysteria or tormented by an

evil spirit. Benode came, examined the patient and pronounced it to be a case of obsession, pure and simple. On hearing this, we went there and watched the case carefully from the beginning to the end. What we saw, is narrated below :

The patient, a girl of 15 or 16, was lying on her side in an unconscious state and moaning. Benode, after going through certain mystic processes, told those who were present that he would ask the patient to come to him. "But," said he, "I would ask as many among you as are sceptical and do not believe this to be a case of obsession at all, and also those who are the strongest among you, to go and restrain her from coming to me, if you can, when I call her to take this seat" (pointing to a wooden seat).

So, the father and the brother of the patient, with a couple of women, sat round her. Benode then struck the wooden seat three times and summoned the spirit in these words : "Come, spirit, sit upon this seat." Though this was not said within the hearing of the girl, yet, as soon as he said this the patient rose imbued with the strength of a giant and forced her way to where she was summoned and sat upon the seat, defiant and furious.

Now there was a tussle between the two,—the exorcist and the spirit,—each trying to bully the other. The exorcist commanded the spirit to vacate the body of the victim ; and the spirit, speaking through the girl, mocked the ghost-doctor and defied him to do his worst, intimating that it was determined not to vacate it. A Hindu girl of 15 or 16—quiet, bashful and obedient—now wore a malignant look, terrible to behold : she ground her teeth in fury and, throwing glances of scorn at the large number of spectators, who had come to see the interesting process, defied them all to do their worst.

The spirit had at last to yield : she disclosed her identity ; she declared that she had been a public

woman in the keeping of — (name told). Having quarrelled with her protector, she had committed suicide by swallowing opium. All these were found to be true in every particular, though the event had happened a decade back. When, at last, the spirit left the body of the girl, the latter swooned away, and after her recovery a few minutes later, she was quite her old self again, and since then she had no further troubles.

Another Case of Possession

The following incident, happened several decades back, in the family of the late Chunder Nath Roy Chowdhury, inhabitant of Nimtah, in the district of 24 Parganas, a few miles to the north of Calcutta. This incident is known in the village by the name of 'Fakeer Chand's confession,' because it was the spirit of Fakeer Chand Chatterjee, who confessed in details of his horrible life in the other world before the public. There are men still living in the village, who were present on the occasion, and who personally observed on the spot the manifestation of the spirit of Fakeer Chand.

Chunder Nath had a wife, who, one day, while sitting in a room in the upper storey of his house and looking out of the window at the adjoining garden, fell suddenly insensible. She had remained in this state for some time till she was found out by another female member, who cried out for help. All who were present in the house at that time, came and, after the application of water to her forehead and fanning, she recovered and was brought to her senses. This was the first indication of the appearance of the spirit or ghost, or whatever you may call it. The woman who was about 18 or 19 years of age, after that, became very morose and pensive and never talked as freely with her com-

panions in the house as she used to do before. The elder female members of the family several times questioned her, as to why she fell insensible; but getting no satisfactory answer, attributed it to hysteria. After some eleven days she again fell insensible. This time it was in the court-yard of the house, where she was engaged in some household work. She again recovered after a few minutes, and went on working as usual, without the least concern, as if nothing had happened. The fit came very frequently almost every day and the woman was being gradually reduced to a skeleton, when every body was alarmed on her account. Doctors were called, and various kinds of medicine, of various systems were tried, but to no effect. Afterwards at the suggestion of the village Guru Mahashaya (the teacher), Krishna Mohun Sircar, it was decided to send for Gangadhur Modak, commonly known as Ganga Moira,—the most celebrated ghost-doctor in Bengal at that time. It was also decided that one Jadu Nath Roy Chowdhury should go and fetch him.

From the very moment this decision was taken, the woman assumed a very different attitude, as if she was greatly annoyed, and began using abusive language towards the Guru Mahashaya, whom she particularised as the author of all her trouble. She also commenced threatening Jadu Nath with death the moment he left his house. Without minding these threats at all, as he was a very strong-minded young man, Jadu Nath left his house, and brought Ganga Moira the next day at about 10 A.M.

Ganga Moira, instead of going to the patient's house, went direct to the village *Pathsala* (elementary school) to meet the Guru Mahashaya (the teacher). From the time Ganga Moira came, though the fact was totally unknown to the patient, she became at times very furious and wanted to run out of the house. But she was kept under strict surveillance by some of the female members, who always guarded her.

It was arranged that the process of curing the patient should be commenced by Ganga Moira on the afternoon of that day in the spacious court-yard of Chunder Nath Roy Chowdhury's house. Just at one o'clock in the afternoon, Ganga Moira came and the whole place was crowded with men and women of the village. A small space,—some ten yards square—in the centre of the courtyard—was selected and all the things necessary for the process were kept there. After washing his feet, Ganga Moira took his seat very close to this spot and requested that his patient should be kept, along with some other women, in a room in the upper storey of the house, the doors of which should be bolted. This was done. A small oblong wooden plank used for a seat was then placed on one side of the spot, in front of which was placed a small unbaked earthen vessel with some milk and a few hibiscus in it. Ganga Moira had a copy of Toolsee Dass's Ramayana with him, which he, with the permission of the Brahmins present, commenced reading from the very beginning. He read for nearly an hour, and when he reached the place, where Hanuman was to enter Lanka (Ceylon) for Sita's liberation, he slapped thrice on that wooden seat, when lo, the woman, who had been very quiet hitherto, and had been talking very familiarly with her companions, became all on a sudden furious, and wanted to force open the doors, which were fastened from outside. The women, who kept her company in that room, all got alarmed, and commenced screaming, when Ganga Moira ordered the door to be opened. No sooner had the door been opened than the woman rushed out, and, without minding any thing, came down and sat upon the wooden plank, groaning heavily, as if in great agony, at times abusing Ganga Moira. The spectators present were astonished at this strange behaviour of the lady, for, though the wooden seat was evidently meant for her, no one expected her to come and sit there. It

appeared as if she was drawn by an irresistible force to the seat by the virtue of the *mantrams*.

After uttering a few more *mantrams*, Ganga Moira asked the woman to declare the name of the man whose spirit had possessed her, and why he did so. After a great deal of prevarication, the spirit said (of course, through the woman) that should he give out his name, his mother, who was then present on the spot, would cry. Every one wondered who his mother could be, but thinking it might be another trick for concealing his name, Ganga Moira pressed him again to tell his name. Upon this the spirit said that his name was Fakeer Chand. No sooner was this said than a thrill passed through the whole assembly, and not a whisper was heard from the men, women and boys collected there. Fakeer Chand's mother went out, of course loudly crying, with her two other children.

Some of the gentlemen, of the sceptic school, who were present there, doubting the statement of the spirit, and considering it to be a trick of the woman, questioned him about the identity of Fakeer Chand. The spirit then thoroughly established his identity. Fakeer Chand was then asked why it was that he took possession of a woman, whose relationship prohibited him from touching her body. Upon this he made his confession. After describing the horrible life he had to lead in the other world, on account of his sins, he said, "I have taken possession of this woman, her disposition being congenial to mine. No one will be able to separate me from her, unless some one goes to Gaya, and offers *pinda* in my name to the lotus feet of Vishnu." A promise of offering such *pinda* at Gaya was made and the ghost ultimately left the body of the woman.

CHAPTER VI

THE CAUSE OF EVIL SPIRIT'S MANIFESTATION

Reports of super-natural phenomena are heard from all parts of the world. Innumerable instances are occurring in India also, but nobody keeps any account of them. Whenever a person is reported to be possessed by an evil spirit in this country, nobody takes the trouble of making any proper or scientific investigation into the matter.

It has also been seen that the Hindus, many of whom are imbued with a belief in re-birth, treat their departed relations, who once occupied their whole heart, with extreme indifference. They have been taught by their preceptors that this world is an illusion, bonds of attachment or relationship are transitory and the sooner they forget their departed relations, the better for their soul. It is for this reason that whenever a disembodied spirit makes its appearance and announces itself to be a relation, instead of welcoming it to know its trouble, the earthly friends get into a terrible fright and try to get rid of it as best as they can, forgetful of the misery and pain they inflict on it.

So all their efforts are directed towards driving out the evil spirit as quickly as possible, and for that purpose the poor person possessed is subjected to all sorts of bodily pain, injury and even torture. The foolish idea underlying this brutal treatment is that all the suffering is caused to the spirit and not to the person possessed. As a consequence of this many a person, unable to bear the pangs of physical suffering and torture, has put an end to his or her life.

There are instances of similar treatment on record among the ignorant people of Europe and America in their dealings with witchcraft. But all super-normal

happenings within the knowledge of scientific persons are being carefully investigated and the results published for the information of the public.

From what we have seen, heard and read of possession by evil spirits, several reasons suggest themselves. Some of the principal among them are given below :

(1) Those who have led an evil life in this world and whose attachment to earthly things is too strong, cannot give up their old habits even after their separation from their physical body. Accordingly in their spirit-life they become earth-bound and seek a favourable opportunity to get control over a physical body to satisfy their desires.

(2) Those who find difficulty in their onward progress after shedding their mortal body, hover round their friends and relatives with a view to getting help for their salvation, and resort to all sorts of devices for drawing their attention.

(3) At the time of death of certain married women the chief thought that troubles their mind is : Would their husbands marry again? In pursuance of such feeling some women would request their husbands, on their death-bed, not to marry again; some cannot summon up sufficient courage to make that request; but if they find after death that their husbands are anxious to marry or have actually married, they quietly descend upon earth and try their best to dissuade them from marrying or if married spoil the happiness of their married life, by all imaginable means. Sometimes, the new wife, or the husband or some other family members, suffer great persecution at the hands of the ghostly visitor.

(4) If there has been intense attachment for one's children, husband or wife, or any other person or thing, the spirit of a dead person manifests itself by materialising, or comes unseen, before the beloved ones to enjoy their company. We have shewn that in a large

number of cases ties of love and relationship are never cut asunder by death. On the other hand, spirits resent if they are sought to be cast off by their living relations.

Such instances are not rare. As already stated, we try our best to keep all such occurrences secret and attempt to exorcise the evil spirits. Some of the trustworthy occurrences, which have been ascertained after careful enquiry, have been recorded in this book in the following pages :

A Departed Wife's Intervention

Sixty years ago Rai Bahadur Ram Shankar Sen was a distinguished Deputy Magistrate and a highly respected member of the Bengali Society. Shortly after his eldest son Girija Sankar's return to India after being called to the Bar, his (Girija's) wife died. After remaining a widower for a few months Girija Shankar fell in love with an Indian Christian lady whom he wanted to marry. This did not meet with the approval of his parents who pressed him to marry a cultured Hindu girl instead. Girija, however, was obdurate and would not break his promise to the Christian girl.

For convenience of his professional work Girija Shanker used to live apart from his parents. One afternoon he took out his *fiancée* and her two sisters for a drive to the Eden Gardens in his own buggy. After a short stroll in the garden they came out and got into the buggy for returning home. As soon as they were seated the horse shied at something, got out of hand and bolted. In its mad career the buggy struck against something and turned turtle violently throwing out all the occupants. Strangely enough, only Girija Shankar and his would-be wife were seriously injured and became unconscious, while the two other sisters escaped altogether unhurt. Girija

Shankar and the girls were then removed to their respective homes.

My uncle, the late Moti Lal Ghosh, recorded this incident in the "Hindu Spiritual Magazine." My father and uncles were on very intimate terms with Rai Bahadur Ram Shankar Sen and his son, Girija Shankar, and naturally anxious enquiries were daily made after this accident. When Girija Shankar's consciousness did not return within two or three days of the accident, the attending physicians became alarmed, but after four or five days his consciousness returned and the doctors became hopeful, yet he succumbed to his injuries the same night.

A few days after Girija's death, uncle Moti Lal gave a call to his old father. He had just then considerably recovered from the effects of his own illness, though he was yet confined to his room. Moti Babu expected to find him completely prostrated with grief, but he was agreeably surprised to find him calm and collected without any trace of emotion in his face. On the other hand, when he found Moti Lal's eyes glistening with sympathetic moisture he sought to call off his mind by saying, "Look here, Moti, I now fully realise that I have spent my whole life in vain. You know how passionately attached I was to my boy, Girija, and how worried I got now and again over his irregular life; but will you be surprised to learn that, instead of mourning over his death, I rejoice at it, because of the wonderful change this great misfortune has wrought in me? I was practically an atheist. I had no faith in the goodness of God. But I now know that my dear son exists, nay, he is now with his devoted wife. Well, if we live after death, not alone but with those whom we love, is not God then very good? Does it not thereby proclaim that He is a loving Father, and not a cruel monster as a bereaved parent may be led to suppose? How blind was I all this time?" And he wiped the tear that started in his eyes.

He paused a little and then went on in the following strain : "When I heard of Girija's precarious condition, my brain reeled and I thought I was near to death. I think, I swooned away. In that condition I saw a being clothed in light, who approached me and said : "God is good. Realise this fact and be happy. As for your son, why do you weep for him when he is going to a better world?" Was it a dream? How can you say so when it has made a new man of me? It seems to me I have been born over again with another mind, another heart. But to proceed. When I awoke I felt an inexpressible joy passing through my system. Of course, all hope of my son's recovery was gone, all the same I was happy.

"In the meantime Girija's case became more and more hopeless. I could not stir out, but my wife saw him constantly. At night, an old servant of my son nursed and watched him. One morning this man came and said to me, "Sir, I am afraid, my young master will not recover." "Why do you say so?" I enquired. "Because," said he, "I find his dead wife almost constantly sitting by him at night. She was perfectly visible to me and it seemed as if she were nursing my master and talking with him, though he lay unconscious all the time."

"On the fifth or the sixth day of his illness," the Rai Bahadur added, "Girija's medical attendants gave out that he had regained full consciousness and passed the crisis." Just then a message was brought to him from the Christian lady whom his son was to marry. The Rai Bahadur was given to understand that she had not yet recovered her senses; but though lying unconscious, she had asked her people to listen to and take down what she had to say and then report the whole thing to the Rai Bahadur. The messenger then related to him the purport of her message which was to the following effect :

"I found myself transported to another world," said the lady to her friends who were nursing her,

“where I saw many people; among others, a Hindu lady who described herself as Girija’s wife. The latter took me severely to task for my attempt to win her husband and marry him. She also gave me a severe castigation for trying to convert a Hindu to Christianity and thereby endanger his soul. She further said that she had done her best to prevent her husband from being won over by me, but when she found that he was determined to marry me in spite of her efforts, she had no other alternative but to resort to some violent means to separate us and secure his salvation. She, therefore, followed the buggy which Girija had driven to the Eden Gardens with me and my sisters and waited till we came back from our walk and occupied it to return home. Just as Girija had taken the reins in his hands, her apparition appeared before the animal, which took fright, bolted and threw all of us out. It was not her intention, she said, to kill any of us, but to do such bodily injury to me as would prevent me from marrying Girija. She had no grudge against my sisters and they, therefore, were practically unhurt. She was glad that my life was safe, and that I should recover without any physical deformity. She was angry with me when I sought to deprive her of her husband but she bore me no ill will, now that her husband was coming back to her. She said that her husband had no chance of recovery; in fact, he would pass over and join her in course of that very night, though for a few hours he would regain his consciousness and look all right. She expressed great joy at the approaching death of her husband; for, said she, he was bound to go astray were he to remain on earth, while in her company, he would overcome all his erring propensities and become a jewel of a man. She insisted on my reporting our conversation to Girija’s father immediately.

“And you know,” said the Rai Bahadur addressing Moti Babu, “that Girija really left us for the other world the same evening.”

In addition to the above the Rai Bahadur also narrated the following incidents to Moti Babu. He said that his second son was at that time employed under Government in some district of Eastern Bengal. He was in the interior when his brother Girija met with the fatal accident and knew nothing about it. One night this second son had a strange dream and wrote to his father, asking what it might mean. He was fast asleep at dead of night when Girija's departed wife appeared before him with a face beaming with delight and dressed in bridal apparel. She had the red vermilion mark on her *sitha* (parting of the hair on the forehead) and conch and steel bracelets on her wrists, as if she had just been married. The Hindu reader knows that a Hindu girl, when married, must wear the vermilion mark at the parting of the hair on her forehead, called *sitha*, and put on bracelets and a red-bordered *saree*. Girija's wife, so wrote the Rai Bahadur's second son, approached him with a smiling face and then laughed and laughed without speaking a word to him. She then addressing my son said, "Don't you see, I am just married again? I left your brother Girija behind and passed my time here as a widow. What a lonely and disconsolate life I had to lead. I also felt unhappy as my husband was not following the right path. But I have got him back,—he has joined me and I have, therefore, appeared before you in my bridal attire," Having said all this, she again laughed merrily and disappeared.

It is scarcely necessary for us to state that the Rai Bahadur was incapable of inventing these stories, specially when they related to his own son and daughter-in-law. He had no motive in doing so, for it was never his intention that these should see the light of day. It should also be borne in mind that he was not only a man of strong common-sense and vast learning, but a thorough sceptic who had no faith in the existence of a life after death. The testimony of such a man has a special value of its own.

Talking with Dead Wife

In October 1898, we came to learn from the late Hem Chandra Dutta, then a sub-editor of the 'Amrita Bazar Patrika', that one of his very near relations, named Mrirtunjoy Mitter (or Mittoo) had not only seen the apparition of his dead wife, but talked with her several times. Mittoo is a son of the late Ambica Charan Mitter, a gentleman who once held a good position in the commercial circle of Calcutta. Mittoo was married to a daughter of a well-known medical practitioner of this city, who had also just then died.

Mittoo was a stranger to us though his father had been an acquaintance. On enquiry we learnt that he was an under-graduate of the Calcutta University, employed as an assistant in a respectable mercantile firm of Calcutta. Through the sub-editor of the "A. B. Patrika," alluded to above, we opened communication with Mittoo and asked him to pay us a visit. But he was very reluctant to come in contact with us or relate his story. However, at last, he was prevailed upon to relate the story.

Instead of seeing Mittoo at ours we preferred, to call on him at his house, so that we might have an opportunity of examining the room and every spot where the alleged apparition of his wife had appeared to him. So on the evening of the 12th October, 1898, my uncle, Moti Babu, went to his place accompanied by Hem Chandra. Mittoo narrated the following incident to them.

Mittoo said that he had married again, and got a little child by his second wife. After his second marriage he had seen his dead wife, now and then in dreams, but he attached no importance to it. He had never read any book on the subject of after-life, nor had he ever cared to do so. The appearance of his dead wife, while he was asleep, did not, therefore, make any impression upon his mind.

In the beginning of December, 1896, one night at 12, Mittoo suddenly awoke to find that his dead wife was standing near his head. A lamp was dimly burning in the room, and his second wife sleeping by his side. He had no belief in ghosts; nay, he was never nervous about uncanny things. But the unexpected apparition of his wife, who, he thought, had been lost to him for ever, unnerved him, and he screamed in fear. His second wife and other inmates of the house were roused from sleep, and when they asked him about the reason of his fright, he said, he had seen something horrible in his dream. He again slept that night, but saw nothing again.

Nearly eight months passed and Mittoo forgot all about the incident mentioned above. His deceased wife had a younger brother who was to be married. She was deeply attached to this brother. For some reason or other Mittoo was not then on good terms with the family of his dead wife's father. He, therefore, took no notice of the approaching nuptials of his brother-in-law. In fact, Mittoo had resolved not to join the marriage party or send any wedding presents. Two days before the marriage of his dead wife's brother, he was sleeping alone in his room with a lamp burning dimly. It was about mid-night, when he suddenly awoke. Opening his eyes he was startled to find his dead wife standing near his bed at a distance of four or five cubits. As soon as they gazed at each other, she began to utter something. Mittoo now sat up but could not catch the meaning of her words. He next intently looked at the apparition when the latter distinctly spoke thus :

"You know how passionately attached I was to my younger brother. Had I been in your world I would have taken keen interest in his marriage and made myself happy. I am not there now; please, therefore, substitute yourself in my place and do all that is needful in this connection. You must make the wedding presents on a suitable scale."

Having said this, the apparition disappeared. Mittoo was very greatly agitated and had not much sleep that night. He rose early next morning and at once started for purchasing wedding presents. His friends and kinsmen were surprised at this unaccountable conduct on his part, for they knew all about his strained relation with his dead wife's family. He, however, did not explain this sudden change of attitude on his part to anybody.

Asked to describe the appearance of his dead wife as he had seen her, he said: "When dying, my first wife was dressed in a *saree* with red border. On her wrists she had conch and steel bracelets. The hair of her head was loose. She appeared to me exactly in the same condition, that is to say, she had a red-bordered *saree*, on her wrists were conch and steel bracelets, and her tresses ran loose. I marked only this difference in her appearance, that while she was almost a skeleton on her death-bed, now she looked quite healthy and strong, just as she had been in her normal condition."

My uncle asked Mittoo if the apparition of his wife expressed any pleasure at seeing him. He said that she showed no sign of any feeling whatever. During her life-time she was always jolly and had a smiling countenance; but now she appeared to be very grave. According to Mittoo's calculation the apparition stood by him and talked for four or five minutes.

Another two months passed and Mittoo had no further communication from his dead wife. He was employed as an assistant in a certain respectable Indian firm at Calcutta and expected an increase to his salary. But his master was apparently not disposed to do him justice, and, in disgust, he was resolved on throwing up his appointment. As a matter of fact, he had drafted his letter of resignation and had it ready for submission on the following day. That night, however, at about midnight, when he was sleeping with a lamp burning in his room, he awoke and saw his dead wife

before him, dressed exactly as on the previous occasion. Mittoo got up in bed, and looked at the apparition, which at once spoke these words: "Don't throw up your appointment; your master will soon increase your salary." Then looking towards his feet it said: "Why do you not apply medicine to the sore?" Mittoo now for the first time opened his mouth. He replied, "I have tried various medicines but in vain. I will no more use any." The apparition said: "I will give you a medicine. Try it and you will be cured." The dead wife then named a certain plant, explained how it should be used, and vanished.

The medicine was applied and proved efficacious. As regards the increase of salary, his master actually sent for him the day following that on which he saw the apparition of his wife, and of his own accord promised to give him a lift. On this occasion also the apparition stayed and conversed with her husband for about five minutes and looked very grave.

Mittoo again did not come across the apparition of his deceased wife for some time, that is to say, till the month of *Sravan* (August 1897) arrived. This *Sravan*, curiously enough, had several times proved a fatal month to the family of the father and uncle of the dead wife of Mittoo, who lived together. Scarcely had a *Sravan* passed without the death of a member of this joint family. Mittoo's first wife herself died in *Sravan*. Before her death, a son and a daughter of her uncle had breathed their last in the same month. Her father likewise departed this life in *Sravan* 1897. A strange coincidence should be mentioned here. She had died of fever after having suffered for 14 days; that was exactly the case with her deceased father.

Mittoo related to us the following extraordinary story regarding a minor daughter of his wife's uncle who was a respected member of the legal profession. This girl and Mittoo's dead wife were of the same age. They were cousin sisters, lived in the same house,

and were deeply attached to each other. When the girl in question was about 8, she now and then fell into a trance and personated a deceased lady who belonged to a Mitter family of Konnagar. The girl used to lose her consciousness and speak thus: "I am the wife of . . . Mitter of Konnagar. My clothes caught fire and I was burnt to death." One day a member of the Mitter family of Konnagar came to the house of Mittoo's uncle-in-law for legal advice. The girl, who was in the inner apartment, became unconscious and said: "My husband is in the outer house talking with Babu," naming the uncle of Mittoo's dead wife. The girl shortly after died. When dying she said: "I had a daughter at Konnagar. She died a few days ago. She has come to take me, so I go." On enquiry it transpired that a lady in a Mitter family of Konnagar had really been burnt to death; apparently the spirit of this lady had possessed the little girl. It also transpired that this lady had a daughter who had died some time before the death of the daughter of Mittoo's uncle-in-law. Possibly the spirit of the Konnagar lady's deceased daughter appeared before her mother, who had yet been in possession of the little girl, when the latter died.

But to return to Mittoo's personal experiences. The month was *Shrawan*, 1897, and the father of Mittoo's dead wife was laid up with fever. No one, however, suspected that it had taken a serious turn. Mittoo was in his bed-room and had all but him fallen asleep,—it was between 11 and 12 at night,—when the apparition of his wife appeared. She said to Mittoo: "Father's condition is not good. Possibly he will not recover. Look after him frequently." The apparition immediately disappeared.

Mittoo was with his father-in-law when he breathed his last. Just before his death, Mittoo found his wife sitting by the side of her dying father. But he saw her only for a few moments. His father-in-law was fully conscious of his approaching end. On seeing

Mittoo he shed tears. Suddenly he fixed his eyes intently upon something invisible to others and burst into a loud fit of laughter. He then turned on his side and immediately expired.

After this incident Mittoo's first wife did not appear for some time to her husband. The latter, however, having seen her apparition so many times became quite indifferent to his second wife who was only a girl of fifteen. He had also quarrelled with the latter's father, and thought of cutting off all connections with them.

Now, as stated above, Mittoo had a child by his second wife, whose *Shasti Puja* ceremony was to have been performed on the 1st of September, 1897, at her father's home. Mittoo was determined to keep himself aloof from this ceremony. With this resolve in his mind he sought his pillow on the 31st of August, 1897, and tried to compose himself to sleep, when he was suddenly visited by the apparition of his wife.

"Today", said Mittoo, "her face was not serious; on the other hand, she smiled and was very gay, as she was in her life-time." Mittoo was in a reclining posture but he sat up to see and hear her more distinctly. She took her husband to task for neglecting his second wife and thus remonstrated with him: "Have you acted rightly," the apparition said, "by not sending the necessary things for the *Shasti Puja* ceremony of your own child? Have you lost your senses completely?" Mittoo replied, "I don't want to keep any connection with my second wife or her father?" The apparition showed some temper and said: "She is yet only a child; how can you be angry with her? And then what is her fault? If you have any quarrel with her father, surely she should not suffer for that; you have married her and owe a duty to your wedded wife. Besides, I have left two little children of mine behind. How can you expect their step-mother, your second wife, to love them if you make her unhappy?" Mittoo was not yet softened and was about to argue, when she mocked him for his stupidity, and in a com-

manding tone, said : "Don't be foolish : Carry out my wishes, help the girl in the *Shasti Puja* ceremony. Make her happy and tell her to take every care of my two children." The apparition then melted away.

At this visit Mittoo made a request to his dead wife. A few preliminary observations are here necessary. Mittoo had not, up to this time, told anybody about the apparition of his first wife. His sudden interest in her father's family, however, had aroused the curiosity of a brother-in-law of his who had married the eldest sister of Mittoo's dead wife. To him Mittoo disclosed all, and his brother-in-law communicated the secret to his mother-in-law. The latter sent word to Mittoo through the same brother-in-law asking that if he, Mittoo, again met her daughter he should not fail to ask her to pay her mother a visit. The brother-in-law also requested Mittoo to tell her to appear before him, if possible, so that he might beg pardon of her for a certain unkind act of his towards her when she was ill. When, therefore, the apparition of Mittoo's first wife appeared before her husband on this occasion, Mittoo enquired of her why she did not make herself visible to others. Her reply was that, as others did not want to see her, so she did not go to them. "But your mother certainly is anxious to see you" suggested Mittoo. "Yes", said she, "I shall try to appear before her." "And your brother-in-law, you know he added," is very sorry for what he did and is therefore dying to have a word with you?"

The apparition gave no reply to this : It only said, "Here we bear no anger or malice to anybody."

After this incident, Mittoo's mother-in-law actually saw her daughter one evening. She related the story to her son-in-law, Mittoo, thus : "My daughter came to see me yesterday evening. Unfortunately I felt nervous, and, therefore, could not carry on any conversation with her." "How was she dressed?" inquired Mittoo. "She had put on the same conch and steel bracelets on her wrists which she had worn

on her death-bed," was the reply. Mittoo's brother-in-law alluded to above, also came across the apparition. He said to Mittoo: "Yesterday, while in a half-sleepy, half-awake state, I saw her, she appeared in a red-bordered *saree*, with conch and steel bracelets round her wrists. I had no conversation with her." It was on the 3rd of October, 1898, that the apparition again came and remained with her husband for a long time. According to Mittoo's calculation it might be 20 to 25 minutes. Mittoo was seated in a chair, reading a book in the light of an ordinary kerosine lamp, the hour was 11 P.M. A younger brother of Mittoo, aged about 20, was sleeping near him at a distance of 10 or 12 cubits, when the apparition appeared. As ill-luck would have it, Mittoo always felt nervous in the presence of his dead wife. She had tried her best to infuse courage into him; all the same, he could not shake off a sense of vague fear. To-day, however, he ventured to ask the apparition a few questions, specially as his dead wife no longer looked grave, but was as gay and full of good humour as she was in her lifetime. The first thing she said, immediately after her appearance, was, "Don't throw up your appointment. Rest assured, your salary will be increased."

Mittoo now put the following questions to his dead wife: "Where are you now? Who are your associates? Who takes care of you? Have you come across my father and your own father who are dead?" The apparition replied: "We are all independent here and rely upon ourselves. I, however, live with my mother's father. I have met your father. He is in a higher place than the one I occupy." Here Mittoo interrupted his wife and enquired, "What do you mean by higher and lower places?" "I cannot explain that to you just now; but I hope to do so in due course," was the reply. Mittoo asked: "Cannot your father make himself visible to me? Where is he?" "Father and I", said she, "now reside in separate places. He

will have to remain for some time where he now is. In due course, he will be strong enough to be able to come to you." The apparition then disappeared. The incident, as already stated, occurred on the 3rd of October, 1898, and we came across Mittoo on the evening of the 12th of that month, when he related the whole story to my uncle. In conclusion Babu Moti Lal Ghosh says, "I took notes of all that he had said, in the presence of the sub-editor of the "A. B. Patrika", who was with me at the time, and recorded them in the form of a memorandum two days later. It is from this memorandum, which is dated 14th October, 1898, and not from memory, that I have written the present story. I mention it to show that the facts stated therein can be thoroughly relied upon, unless, of course, it is suggested that a fiction was deliberately concocted by Mittoo and thrust upon me. But Mittoo had no motive to deceive us or a few near relations of his, with a story which, he was very particular, should never see the light of day and which concerned his dead wife, whose memory was sacred to him.

Asked if he found anything in the apparition which was not noticeable in his wife when she was alive, Mittoo replied thus: "The apparition was the exact copy of her former self. I was surprised to find that there was not the slightest change even in her fingers, teeth, etc. What was still more astounding, was her voice. She spoke as distinctly as she did when she was alive—in fact, her words were so distinct that there was not the slightest difficulty in understanding her. I caught every word she uttered. She looked serious in the beginning, but during her last two visits she had the same smiling and lively face peculiarly her own. It seemed to me as if she was leaning on the wall and the distance between me and her apparition was between four and five cubits." He then showed Moti Babu the spot on the wall where the apparition had invariably appeared as well as the bed-stead and the chair where he had sat.

Mittoo had not seen the apparition since the 3rd of October, 1898. It was learnt that both Mittoo and the members of his family, frightened at the frequent visits of the apparition of his dead wife, had performed a certain ceremony which had the effect of putting a stop to its appearance.

My Strange Nightly Visitor

Shiva Brat Lall, M.A., narrated the following sensational account in the 'H. S. Magazine' of September 1907 :

"I do not believe in ghosts. That they may or may not exist is a question, which I never set my heart to solve. It never troubled me nor do I care for its truth or otherwise. Nevertheless I cannot divest myself of the impression of having seen a strange visitor, during the latter part of a night, and up till now I have not been able to unravel the mystery.

Nearly twelve years ago, I was the Head Master of a Church Missionary Society's school at Chunar in the district of Mirzapore. I was living in a small but snug and comfortable house owned by one Anantoo Pasi at a little distance from the river Ganges.

It was the month of Phalgun (March). One day I was all alone in my house, my younger brother, Suraj Narayan Singh, having gone to Munshi Ajodhia Prasad, the Tahsildar and Assistant Magistrate of the place. The latter gentleman was my relation. It was nearly 3 o'clock in the morning when I awoke. The morning breeze was extremely refreshing. But as it was still dark, I thought it advisable to remain in my bed. I lay with my eyes half-open and half-closed. Shortly after my room was lighted up, and I found to my surprise that a lady of fair and fascinating complexion was slowly coming towards me. I rubbed my eyes, but I still found the figure there. The fact is, I was a retiring sort of man and never mixed freely with either men or women. Even very few of my male friends paid me visits, and I had no acquaintance with any woman. The sudden appearance of the woman at that hour of the night, with her exquisite personal charms, rather dumb-founded me. She, however, came straight to

me and made me a *salaam* or a low bow. I thereupon took courage and asked her, who she was and what made her come to me. To this query, she replied, that she was a daughter of Mir Suayat Husen, pensioned Tehsildar and wife of Khwaja Afzal Husen, and that a particular piece of business brought her there.

"You should not have come to me thus," said I, "for a lady of your social position it is rather unbecoming to pay a visit to a stranger at this hour of the night."

My visitor laughed at this remark and said, "I could not find a better man to serve my purpose. I think, you will do well and your words will have some effect on him with whom I wish to communicate through you."

Her words puzzled me, and I said, "Pray, what can I do for you?"

Instead of replying to my question, she presented her child to me and asked, "What do you think of this babe?" It was a delicate and sickly child and I said so to the girl.

"Exactly," said my fair companion, "its father and grandfather, both of them, are utterly neglecting the child. If no proper care is taken, three or four days hence it will die. But no medicine can now do it any good. To-morrow morning you better send for my husband, and tell him, that his behaviour towards his only child is anything but fatherly. It shouldn't have been so. Tell him to pour a few drops of sesame-oil on the navel of the child and lay it down for 15 minutes at least in the sun, continue this treatment for three days and it will do good to the infant."

I agreed to do so and in an apologetic tone asked her to leave my presence, as people might think ill of us both. The lady, without taking any notice of my remark, made a *salaam* to me again and departed with the child in her arms.

As soon as she was gone, I opened my eyes. It was now nearly day-break. I was in a very happy mood of mind. I thought I had seen a vision, and in fact it was so.

Khwaja Afzal Husen was known to me personally. I had seen him only twice. He was a member of a very respectable Shia Mahomedan family. Before my joining the Missionary School, he was serving there as an Assistant Master. But as he was suffering from pthisis, his medical adviser had told him to leave the school and go to Naini Tal for change of climate. Accordingly he was at the time on leave of absence. His wife who visited me in the dream was dead, and had left an infant daughter.

Now to continue the narrative: I repaired to school that day earlier. It was not open, so I had to wait in the Medical Hall of Mahomed Shaffi, a student of mine. Khwaja Afzal Husen, in the meantime, came in view. He had returned from Naini Tal only a day before this occurrence. I called to him aloud. He came to me and I delivered the message to him in my best form possible. He was devouring every word that fell from my lips and after I had finished, he left me and acted according to the direction of his dead wife.

He came to me in the evening and told me that the child had loose bowels, and eight Kechwa (worms) had come out. The treatment was repeated three days continually with similar result. As a precautionary measure he applied oil on the fourth day also, but with no effect. The treatment had a good effect on the health of the child and Afzal Husen was very thankful for it.

Spiritual Manifestation in a Hospital

The following account of spontaneous spiritual manifestation going on at that time in the Hanuman-nagar Hospital, Bhagalpur District, sent by the medical officer in charge of the hospital, a graduate of the Calcutta University and which appeared in the 'H. S. Magazine' of November 1908, is reproduced below :

"I beg to approach you with a very strange case of ghostly pranks which has simply bewildered me, and I hope you will kindly send me your advice as to how I can get rid of the ghosts. I have been so much worried and frightened by the occurrence that I have been obliged to change my quarters.

Originally I had my quarters within the hospital compound. I lived there with my wife, two children and my elder brother's wife, a widow. I have been the medical officer here since the last five years. On the 23rd of September last, Wednesday, at about 2-30 A.M. in the morning, a loud knock was heard on the door of the room occupied by my sister-in-law.

We took it to be the work of thieves, and immediately made a search all round, but nothing was found. Next day, at about the same time at night, another knock was heard, and, as thieves are rampant here just now, we made a more elaborate search after them without being able to find out the offender.

On the third day, brick-bats began to fall from all sides, from morning till dusk. We received about 50 or 60 of them throughout the day. After nightfall we began to hear knocks on all the doors. We, thereupon, made arrangements to keep a strict watch throughout the night. A gentleman of the place volunteered to help us, and we and my servant and the cook, kept up watching till 2 o'clock in the morning with lights, and wooden clubs. We passed the night in the verandah of the house.

After we took up our position in the verandah, knocks began to be heard incessantly. As soon as knocks were heard at a certain door and we ran towards it, they ceased at once and fresh knocks were heard at another place. It appeared to us that some invisible force was amusing itself by putting us to all this trouble. It was in this way that we passed the whole night.

On another night four or five men kept watch on the verandah with a gun. The gun was fired several times, but with no better result. This state of things continued for a few nights together. We were then obliged to change our quarters. But here also we were not allowed rest. Though for two nights successively everything passed off smoothly, the disturbances commenced on the third. We used to take our food in our original dwelling place, but slept in our new lodgings. Brick-bats were thrown only when my sister-in-law went to take her food in our old house. But nothing of the sort happened when I or my wife went there.

"I have said that we passed only two quiet days at our new quarters. But from the third night knocks

began to be heard again at the side where my sister-in-law used to sleep. One night we changed places, and I slept with my wife at the side where my sister-in-law slept before. And as was expected no knocks were now heard on that side, but they followed my sister-in-law and were heard at the place previously occupied by my wife and myself. No stones were thrown in our new lodgings. They were thrown in large numbers only when my sister-in-law went to our old place, and only a few of them fell when my wife went there. But if myself or any other male member went there no disturbance was found to occur.

"After we had stopped at our new quarters for 4 or 5 days, these knocks somewhat changed their character. At first there were gentle raps on the door, but they gradually changed their volume and intensity and became loud knocks which generally frightened everybody. Sometimes knocks were heard within the almirah containing medicines. On a few occasions sounds were heard within the almirah even at daytime. The knocks continued without cessation even if a large number of people were present at the door. What however happened afterwards was simply astounding, and we were obliged to remove from our new house also.

"Up to this time there were only raps and knocks and showering of brick-bats. But now the mosquito-curtains began to be swayed to and fro with great force at night after we had gone to bed. Cold draughts of air which sent a thrill through our system, began to be blown within the curtains. Fans were suddenly taken away from our beds and that with great force. These fresh antics on the part of the spirit, or whatever you might call him, naturally frightened us a good deal and we sought refuge in another house as I told you.

"I forgot to mention one fact. When in our old house, on two occasions, during the daytime, though all the doors and windows were kept closed and there

was no opening even for the admission of a needle into the room, we were astonished to receive a shower of brick-bats on our cot. This matter was found to have passed through matter apparently. Brick-bats were pelted even at cooking pots, when cooking was going on. One day a few gentlemen visited our house to see things for themselves. We were seated on a wooden cot and discussing the matter. As soon as, however, one of us remarked that we might hear a knock if we could wait only a few minutes, there was a loud knock on the door which was quite close to us.

"Besides raps and loud knocks we heard also scratchings on the doors. One day when the knocks were going on, we said amongst ourselves, we must vacate the house at once and the knocks ceased immediately. On another occasion, as soon as we said, "We have been fortunately spared to-day from any disturbances" and the knocks were renewed at once. So it was quite plain that the invisible force was near us and readily understood us. Yesterday, after having removed to our new lodgings, we have not as yet come across any fresh developments. It is not exactly our intention to give publicity to our experiences through your journal. But we are quite sick of these antics and we solicit your help in getting rid of these disagreeable occurrences. We are quite willing to meet any reasonable expenses in getting things to their original state."

In reply to the above, Mahatma Sisir Kumar, the Editor of the H. S. M., wrote to him as follows :

"It is the work of a spirit but not a wicked one, most probably that of a relation. He wants to open communication with you. You better ask him, "Who he is and what he wants." And it was suggested by the Editor how he should try to open communication.

He was also told, that what he thinks a misfortune, may possibly change into a very great blessing. In

reply to the above the following reply was sent to the Editor :

October 20, 1908.

Sir,

I am delighted to receive your favour of the 18th instant. After I had written my first letter, the following incidents have taken place. "We stopped for four days in our new house and during the time did not feel anything amiss. Within that time nothing happened in our old house also, so we came back there. We are now in our original house again. As soon as however, we came there, 6 or 7 stones were thrown during the day on the roof of the house, and about 3 or 4 within the rooms, and a few knocks were heard on the doors for two days successively. The nights were rather quiet.

"From the third day, however, the manifestations assumed a new form. Hitherto the disturbances occurred without any bodily injury to us, but now master ghost took a fancy to cut practical jokes on us. The doors were suddenly closed and my sister-in-law began to receive blows and slaps on her person. We heard the sound of blows. She was also pinched on her body. Even my wife was not spared. She also received the same treatment, but not with so much force as my sister-in-law did.

"One day an Ole (arum) was found to drop from the ceiling to the floor of the room. Thus matter was sent through matter again. An earthen pot was kept filled with ashes. In the presence of all of us this earthen pot was suddenly imbued with life; it turned itself, threw down its contents and then resumed its former position. Some skins of potatoes were kept at a place, and these were now thrown on the head of my sister-in-law. Now and then *bael* leaves are being showered on her devoted head which of course were brought from a distance.

“One night a Brahmin appeared to my sister-in-law in her dream and said, if you ask me to come I shall come and if you tell me to go I shall go away. There was no more disturbance on that particular night and day. And, in order, to prove the truth of the Brahmin’s statement I asked my sister-in-law the following night to desire that the spirit should appear. No sooner had she desired it, than there fell three brick-bats on the cot in the room, underneath the mosquito curtains, and three or four knocks were heard on the door. She then desired that there should be no reptition of such things, and every thing stopped. Though, of course, nothing was heard of the ghosts on that particular night, but we know that the ghosts have not altogether left us. Your letter of the 18th instant reached us at 3 P.M. Everything was quiet before the receipt of this letter. After I made over the letter to the members of the house for perusal, two small pieces of cotton, besmeared with scent, were plugged in the ears of my sister-in-law, after the manner of Indians in the habit of using *atar*. It was afterwards found that the scent used was from a phial of essence kept in the room. After sometime when she was in the cookshed, her wrapper was taken away from another room and thrown on her body.

“Besides the incidents stated above, various other things are also happening now and then, which shewed that the spirit meant to play jokes on my sister-in-law. The ghost has evidently a large fund of humour in him. We have now learnt from experience that if we talk about the spirit, he will shew by his action that he is near us and hearing us.

“A phial of essence was kept in a closed box under lock and key. This was brought out, the stopper was removed and a large quantity of scent was poured on the head of my sister-in-law. The box was then found to be closed like before. Some of us were incidentally talking about money, and, in an instant, a rupee and five pice were brought out from a closed box and were

dropped in our presence. This box, like before, was also found under lock and key.

"According to your instructions we made sister-in-law sit quietly with a piece of paper and pencil. In a few minutes her hand began to shake. Then she complained that she felt very bad in her heart. The hand was, it seemed, trying to write, and she wrote out something on the piece of paper which I beg to send herewith.¹ Then she fell down quite senseless and muttered out the following :

" 'I love you most dearly. I have come to see you as we have not met for an age. I feel sorry if you suffer. I asked you to use scent, but you did not listen to me. I, therefore, myself put scent on your person. I bid you not to go. I touched you to remind you of me, for you have forgotten me. I, however, did not forget you.' She went into fits of this nature eight times in the course of this day and every time spoke to us intelligently. She always falls senseless having said, 'I have come' and clenches her fists and she awakes saying, 'I go.' "

The medical man in charge of the hospital, when he came to know that it was the work of an unseen agency, at once came to the conclusion that the agency was no other than a ghost.

In this country the belief is that those spirits, who manifest themselves, are low and generally evil. So the medical man wrote to us for help and advice how to get rid of the devil. We, however, suspected that the ghost was either a friend or a relation, at least a harmless one, who was trying to draw attention. We wrote to the medical officer to that effect. His letters printed above speak for themselves. The subsequent doings of the spirit are still more wonderful.

¹ From the two or three lines of scrawl written by her, we have been able to decipher only the following : "I shall not tell you now. Don't be afraid—I love you". Ed. H. S. M.

He has, at last, announced himself to be the husband of the widowed lady. Now that communications have been opened the spirit-husband is talking and talking incessantly. Our correspondent writes that his sayings and doings would form a big volume. Our correspondent says that he is absolutely certain that the spirit is no other than his dead brother. One reason for this supposition is that he is talking in a way which his dead brother only could do,—he is cognisant of all the family secrets. He has summoned his other brothers to come to him, so that he can talk to them. He is in the highest spirits, always practising practical jokes on his delighted wife. They suffered a sad bereavement, but now they are happy. They feel the presence of their dead dear one constantly. He proves his presence not only by talk but by many wonderful physical manifestations. Just observe one thing: he has declared that he can do better in the darkness than in light. It appears that the good spirit is not willing that his wife should be the gaping-stock of open-mouthed curiosity.

The doctor, who was a thorough sceptic, was dumb-founded. He not only saw an invisible force working all around him, but saw it was guided by intelligence. He clearly perceived that "telepathy" or "subliminal consciousness" would not meet the requirements of the case. So, in despair, he wrote to us for advice and guidance. We suggested that it was all the work of a spirit, and the spirit was no doubt a near relation who wanted to open communication. So what they should do was to put paper and pencil before the sister-in-law who was no doubt the medium, and to ask the spirit to say his say if he had anything to communicate. This was done and the response came immediately. The lady wrote, in effect, the following in Bengali: "I cannot tell you now. Don't be afraid, I love you." This was followed by a second communication to this effect: "I love you most dearly. I have come to see you as we have not met for an age. I feel sorry if you suffer. I touched you to remind you of me, for you

have forgotten me, though I have not forgotten you. I asked you to use scent but you did not. I had therefore to dose you with scent.

After this the lady began to talk, she would go into fits of trance and then talk. This spirit announced himself to be the husband of the lady, and brother of the doctor. So, in great glee, the doctor wrote to us that the spirit was no other than his brother,—dead some years. We wanted to know how he could be sure that he was the brother and no other, and in reply he wrote to us that he found it out very easily. "Is it possible for anyone to personate a brother with whom I have lived together for a good many years and then deceive me? If the spirit was a fraud he would have been detected at once." This is reasonable.

Gradually this brother-spirit became a familiar, though invisible, figure in the family. He resented being called a ghost. He was high above that. In fact, he wanted worship as angels are worshipped. He then undertook to heal diseases by administering drugs and adopting other methods. A short time after he began to get scarce day by day, and finally disappeared altogether from the family.

The lady began as a writing medium, but the mode of communication subsequently changed. She would enter into a state of trance, and while quite senseless, personate other people and talk. In this manner she would be entranced several times a day. Thus, while doing her household duties, she would suddenly fall down in a swoon. In this state, after saying the say of the controlling spirit, she would come to her senses forgetting what she had said just before. In short, she never sat to invoke spirits, they came of their own motion. The trance would come suddenly without any previous intimation whatsoever. Gradually, however, the spirit left her and the doctor, who never took any acute interest in the matter, was rather glad than sorry to see her sister-in-law, regaining her normal condition.

In this manner, a few months passed, but spirits suddenly manifested themselves again in the beginning of June. This time the spirit who announced himself was a total stranger to the family. He gave a name which was not known. He said that the spirit-world is divided into several localities. Thus there is the Heaven where the highest spirits reside. Then there is the world of those who have improved themselves by a rigid spiritual training. And there is the place what she called *Indraloke*, where the philanthropists find their home. There is also the ordinary spirit-world and the world of the wicked. In this way, the spirit said, the spirit-world is divided into six localities. Those of the lowest world, by improving themselves, get a promotion next to their place of habitation.

"One day," writes the doctor in his letter dated June, "the lady suddenly entered into a state of trance and declared that a saint was standing before her with a cup of consecrated water in his hand. And this water he would sprinkle over your persons, which would purify your body and soul. No sooner had this been said than we saw a few drops of water falling on my body and that of my wife." "Another day when we were anxious," continued the doctor, "because of the high fever of my daughter, the lady was entranced and she said that a spirit would cure the girl by putting a mark on her forehead. Just then we actually saw a black round spot appearing on the forehead of the girl between the eyes, and the girl was healed soon after."

"Again, another day the spirit informed us," continues the doctor, "that good spirits had just then worshipped God with water, sandal-paste and *toolsi* (holy basil) leaves as is the custom with a certain sect of Hindus. And he said that, in proof of it, you would find a brass pot with the *toolsi* leaves, and the scented water. We (myself and my wife) were directed to eat the *toolsi* leaves as we were told this would do us good. As regards the *toolsi* leaves what is wonderful is that they are not to be found in this part of the country.

"Another day my sister-in-law was passing by me while I was sitting. I saw an envelope drop on her head and this was carried to me, as if by the wind. I immediately took it up and found my name written in English on it. On opening the envelope I found a letter which contained a sentence, also in English, addressed to my sister-in-law, being signed by Hemanginee Devi. In that letter, Hemanginee Devi requested my sister-in-law, in English, not to delay any longer but to come quick to her husband. This Hemanginee, who is dead, was the wife of a friend of my brother."

Some explanation is necessary here. It would appear that the spirit Hemanginee had procured a piece of paper and an envelope to enclose it. In this paper she had asked the doctor's sister-in-law to come as soon as possible to the spirit-world to her husband. This letter fell from the skies when it was clear day. The paper and the envelope had been taken from the doctor's box, but the writing was strange. Nobody could say whose handwriting it was, and the wonder of wonders is that the sister-in-law, that is to say, the medium, did not know a word of English.

We wanted to know whether any trickery was possible and the doctor said that it was quite impossible; for, "we live in a small house and the members of the family consist of myself, my wife, my sister-in-law and my two little girls. Servants are not permitted in."

Several spirits came and if their communications had been recorded, the doctor says, they would form a bulky manuscript. But unfortunately no record was kept. The doctor has, however, kindly promised to reproduce the communications from memory and let us know.

Pelting of Stones by Ghosts

Mahatma Sisir Kumar describes the following sensational incident in the 'Hindu Spiritual Magazine' of March, 1906 :

"Popular notion in India is that ghosts pelt stones and I had an ocular demonstration of the fact. It was in the month of December, 1897, that I witnessed a scene which proved that there are many things in heaven and earth that are not dreamt of in our philosophy. I was in the town of Deoghur in my own house situated in an open place. Close to my house was that of one Gonori Mahato which also was situated in an open place. It came to my notice that ghosts had appeared in his house. Shortly after I had heard this I saw Gonori himself. I asked him about the ghost and he said, "Yes sir, it is a *pichash* (which means a ghost of very low degree). I was a little surprised to hear this from him. For Gonori had become a Christian, and was not likely to put faith in the existence of ghosts, lower or higher. I asked him what the ghost was doing in his house, but he was not communicative and went his way. I forgot all about it, when a strange incident brought the pranks of this ghost again to my notice. Gonori, being a milk-man, supplied me with milk, and an Ooria servant of mine went to fetch it. He was brought back almost in an unconscious state by a friend of Gonori just before evening. I asked Shiva, the servant, to explain the reason of his sorrowful plight. He said after great effort,—for he could scarcely utter a word,—that hearing that ghosts were playing mad pranks in the house of Gonori, he had gone to fetch milk a little before the usual time he used to bring it, that is, before the sun had gone down. Evening was just setting in and he was coming with the milk, when, no sooner had he left Gonori's house than a black and hideous thing pounced upon him and inflicted a blow upon his breast, so that he fell senseless with a groan. Gonori had invited a few friends

to his house to pass the night with him to protect him from the *pichash*, and thus, when they heard his groan, they came to his rescue and brought him home.

On the following morning, I went to Gonori's house, which was about two minutes' walk from mine, accompanied by two friends, both of them highly educated and intensely intellectual. His house, as I said before, was situated in an open space where the ghost might conceal himself, but even this would be impossible in daytime if he was a fraud. On entering the house we found a girl of about twelve sweeping the yard with a broom-stick, the yard being surrounded with huts and walls. The other inmates of the house,—Gonori himself, his mother aged seventy and his wife about forty five,—were all absent. Seeing that the girl was the only inmate of the house doing household work, we went outside chatting at random, nearly forgetting all about the ghost. My friends were a few yards from me talking together, and I took this opportunity of addressing the ghost in these words: "Sir ghost, if you are here, please shew yourself to us, for we are highly respectable gentlemen and you should behave properly with us." No sooner had I said this than a clod of earth came rolling down the slope of the hut near which I was standing. This amused me greatly, for I could not believe that it was actually a ghost that had responded to my call. So I asked my friends to note the politeness of the ghost which had actually listened to my request. They had heard the sound of the fall of the clod, but had not seen it coming down. So they came close to me to examine the clod. I again addressed the ghost. I said: "Sir ghost, this is highly improper, you should be impartial in the treatment of your guests. You have satisfied me but not my friends. Please shew yourself to them also." No sooner had I said this than there rolled another clod, and this time we all three saw it. Let me confess, this time we were all surprised. But was that girl doing it? No, we could see from our position that she was busy doing her work of sweeping.

I again addressed the ghost, "Sir ghost, remove all our doubts and do favour us again." No sooner said than done. Another clod of earth came down rolling, following the other two. We were petrified with astonishment. It was about 9 in the morning, the sun was up in the skies, and there was not a speck of cloud. And we three saw this before our eyes in an open field where there were none besides the girl who was sweeping the yard. But no time was allowed us by the good ghost to speculate upon what we had witnessed, for the merry thing now began to roll down stones of its own accord, one after another, in rapid succession. Then clods and stones began to fall in the yard which the girl was sweeping. We ran there and then commenced as it were a perfect rain of stones, pieces of burnt brick and clods of earth. Where did they come from? From the skies? Perhaps. Perhaps not; for some of them struck the mud-walls of the huts horizontally. Of course, we were afraid of being struck by these missiles but luckily we escaped unhurt, but some were hurt subsequently though slightly. For, the fact of this strange occurrence had gone abroad, and people were running to the house from all sides, even from the town, which was about half-a-mile distant from the place. The house was thus filled by hundreds of men in a short time.

As I said, it was broad daylight and though there were hundreds present, none could tell whence the stones came. The inmates of the house had come back and they were kept in one place huddled together so that they might play no tricks. But the scene that presented itself (it was literally hailing stones) convinced every one that there could be no trick at the bottom. The yard was soon filled with these clods, stones, etc., and they became almost knee-deep in a short time.

But the most wonderful feats, performed by the ghost, yet remain to be told. A big piece of stone,

weighing over a hundred pounds (more than a maund)—which it would be difficult for one strong man to carry, was brought out from the bottom of the well which stood on one side of the yard and thrown in the yard. A little before this we had heard a splashing of water in the well, and the big stone was brought out and made to fall in the yard with a thud. This so terrified the onlookers, that while some fled others took shelter in the huts.

I had a notion that the girl was a medium and it was through her that the ghost was playing his pranks. This notion I gathered by observing one fact. It was : The clods fell most where the girl stood. So, I led her and Gonori's wife to the eastern side of the house in a field where mustard had been grown, but gathered. It was an open field filled with clods of earth among which, no doubt, the ghost had found some of his missiles. I made the girl and the women sit in the field. There they sat, and wonder of wonders, the clods round them began, as it were, to dance. Thus a clod would rise, say, four or five feet from the earth and fall down. At times more than one clod would thus rise up and fall down. Here then we had the scene of clods of earth in the midst of the field dancing, as if they were imbued with life, and this at about eleven in the day and in the presence of hundreds. It seemed to me that in the field the ghost had not power enough to be able to throw the clods to any distance.

The intellectual critic, after he has read so far, might exclaim, *cui bono*? "What do you prove by the incident?" Well, we have not done yet, we have yet to record more wonderful doings of this ghost. Indeed, I succeeded eventually in making it talk to me in its ghostly way. Yet does not the incident, so far as described above, prove anything? Does it not prove that there are more things in heaven and earth than are ever dreamt of in our philosophy, and that the scientists have yet much to learn? It proves

that a thing which has no material body can pelt stones and can also possess gleams of reason. Did not the thing, by listening to our request in the beginning, shew that it could hear and understand us? Does not the incident of bringing the big stone from the bottom of the well prove that it had method in its mad pranks? So the incident, so far as has been described, proves that there is no impossibility in a man losing his body yet retaining his physical powers and reasoning faculties. But wait till you have heard the end.

In the midst of this scene, the thought troubled me that it was my duty to make the most of the occasion, for such experiences do not fall to the lot of every man. But I was bewildered, I could not think of a plan how to utilise the occasion, or how to experiment with the ghost who was playing the mad pranks. He was no doubt, we thought, one of a low degree, that is, an earth-bound and gross soul. Was he dense enough to be visible to the naked eye? I tried and tried again to see him but I could see nothing. I then came to the conclusion that I must take time to think over the matter and should commence my experiments on the next day. Yet I could not leave the spot,—I was so enthralled that I had to wait to see the end.

Suddenly a thought struck me that I might as well take the girl to a closed room, and see what the result would be. So I took her and Gonori's wife to a room, which had walls on all sides, but no windows whatever and only a small door to enter by. We sat all three together and kept the door open. Those who remained,—it was then about 2 P.M. and most having left the place,—stood outside, bewildered. For five hours the ghost had been pelting stones, and when I took the woman and the girl, I saw that its power had got a little weakened. Well, we three sat facing one another. There was almost as clear light in the room as there was outside. I then addressed the ghost, and requested him that now was the time for him to shew wonders. Saying this we remained quiet.

Of course, our people know what a *shika* is. It is a contrivance made of jute like a sling to hang pots and cups on. A *shika* was hanging behind me, on which was placed a cup made of *sal* leaves, containing a small quantity of a sort of coarse pulse grown in those parts, called *kurthi*. I heard a rustling sound behind me, and on turning my eyes I saw that the leaf-cup was trying, as it were, to leave its place. After some slight efforts it succeeded in raising itself and pouring its contents (the *kurthi*) upon my 'devoted' head. Of course, I was amused a little at this prank though I was also frightened a bit. So the ghost was a wit. I told him, "You have soiled my head." But the ghost, of course, could not speak, and so I got no answer. A minute or so later, I heard a noise proceeding again from the same spot. This time I saw it was a wooden bowl which produced it. The bowl, which had also been put on the *shika*, shewed signs of life, and it seemed that it was also trying to come out of its place of confinement. After some efforts it succeeded in releasing itself and coming towards me. And the bowl now poured its contents upon my head.

All this while the girl and the woman were sitting before me in broad daylight. And what did this bowl contain? It was salt. So Mr. Ghost poured all the salt that the bowl contained upon my head.

This was joke number two. And we all three laughed. "Can you speak, even in whispers?"—I asked the ghost. No answer. There was a bamboo stick—a lathi, in short, a bamboo club about 5 ft. in length—in the room, leaning against a corner. This was the third object which was seen to shew signs of life. It trembled a little, as if some one was shaking it; then it stood erect. Next it began to move and approach me by short hops, as some birds would do, when walking. And then it seemed to me as if somebody had grasped it with both hands and was, in that

manner, carrying it towards me; then it struck the earth with great force. My head escaped by a few inches only. If the club had fallen upon my head, it would have received a serious hurt. It seemed to me that the ghost was giving me a hint to depart and thus escape worse treatment. I had, indeed, to put an end to my experiment immediately and came out. It was then about half past two, the ghost had begun its manifestations a little before 9 A.M. I came home exhausted in body and mind, though with a deep determination to continue the experiments the following day.

On the following morning, I went to the place and found that the girl had fled with her husband. They were Gonori's relations, and were staying with him as guests. They were told by some mischievous people, that the police would punish them; and this frightened them so much that they fled. I searched for them and at last found their whereabouts, but could not induce them—rather the husband—to come back.

We thus witnessed what may be called an occult phenomenon. We saw it along with many hundred others in broad daylight. Any tricks, under the circumstances, would be impossible. Now the reader is left to draw his own conclusions.

We saw an invisible thing giving proofs that it possessed enormous physical powers; that it had consciousness, nay, that it understood a joke. Was it the soul of a dead man that was acting in that way? Of course, the evidence is not conclusive that it was a dead man who was doing it. For to prove this conclusively the "thing" ought to have declared that it had been a man before and then proved his identity by other unimpeachable evidence. But yet the incident carries with it a moral conviction which is irresistible, that it was done by a man who had lived on this earth before."

This incident of pelting of stones in the town of Deoghur, was witnessed by the Editor and many hundreds of men in broad daylight, and in an open field, where there was no possibility even for a hare or a fox to conceal itself.

Now it is simply impossible to disbelieve a manifestation like this. The man who does so is either a knave or a fool; no amount of testimony will convince such a block-head of any fact whatsoever.

Now this pelting of stones does not prove spiritualism conclusively. But it proves that there is an energy which is outside man that can exert considerable force upon matter. To prove spiritualism we have to prove three propositions :

Namely, (1) there exists an energy which is beyond the control of man; (2) this energy is intelligent; and (3) this intelligent energy is only the spirits of men. This incident does not prove much intelligence, though it does here and there and that in a remarkable degree.

The Haunted Bungalow

The following ghost story over the signature of "Micro" was published in the 'H. S. Magazine' of May 1907. The writer, Mr. Dey, is a well-known member of our society. In a private letter to the editor he assured that the story "is real, the best authenticated and the most thrilling one that has been made public during the century." Mr. Dey, who narrated the story, saw every thing with his own eyes. He is a highly educated Bengali, with English training and a brother of one of the leading pleaders of the United Provinces. The Taluqdar, mentioned in the story, is a Raja Bahadur. The bungalow is situated in a district in Oudh. The full names of the

persons and of the places of occurrence are withheld for private reasons.

Mr. Dey narrated that in September, 1897, he was appointed manager to the estate of a well-known Taluqdar of Oudh and he hastened to join his appointment from Benares. His route lay by the Oudh and Rohilkhand Railway up to the Akhbarpur station, whence he had to travel about thirty miles over pucca roads on an elephant. He reached his destination in the afternoon and almost immediately had an interview with his employer, the Raja, who not merely treated him with courtesy and kindness, but seemed solicitous for making his stay with him as pleasant and comfortable as lay in his power. Finding him rather tired after his long ride, the Raja sent him with some of his officers to choose lodgings for himself from among a few houses he asked them to show over. He saw all one by one, but they, unfortunately, looked so damp and dirty that he could not think of living in any one of them.

His look of disappointment was, however, noticed by the Raja's men and, after consulting in whispers among themselves, one of them told him that there was a good bungalow about a mile and a half from the village which might suit his liking and requirements. It had belonged formerly, they said, to a European indigo-planter who sold it to a relative of the Raja and retired. The officer also said that, if the Raja was requested he might secure it for the manager.

This proposal revived his drooping spirit and he straightway went back to the Raja and after informing him of the unsuitability of the houses shown to him for his residence, he asked the Raja if he could let him have the indigo-planter's bungalow. He detected a quick look of concern in the eyes of the Raja as soon as he made this request and the Raja glanced sharply at his men. But presently the Raja looked at him and said: "Yes, there is such a

bungalow, but it won't suit you. Besides, it is situated at some distance from the village in an open and lonely spot."

"The lonlier the better for me," Mr. Dey said at once. "But as to its suiting me or not, may I see it once?"

"No, you need not trouble yourself about seeing it. It is not a place where you should put up."

"Why? Is it not habitable or is it dilapidated?"

"Not at all. It is all right so far." The Raja looked troubled, as could be seen, and quite at a loss what to say. He paused for a few seconds and resumed, "But I can't ask anybody to live there for a single night, much less a respectable man like you who is again my manager."

Mr. Dey was not in a compliant mood at the time and he persisted in asking "Why?"

"Because," the Raja replied with the faintest disquietude in his voice, "the house is notoriously haunted and none who stops there at night is expected to come out alive in the morning." Mr. Dey raised his brows in amused surprise; his disbelief in ghost was very solid. The idea of a house being haunted, he could have laughed to scorn had the Raja been his friend instead of his master. As it was, he checked the temptation and said gravely: "If that is all your objection to my putting up at the bungalow, I would beg you to kindly have it opened and arranged for me. I tell you, Raja Sahib, no ghost will appear before me, simply because I do not believe in such a thing."

The Raja, however, could not, for a long while, be persuaded to accede to his request; for, as he put it, he could not prove the cause of Mr. Dey's death. But he was obdurate; the Raja at last very reluctantly gave in and passed the necessary orders for arranging it for his residence.

In an hour or so Mr. Dey was informed that it was ready for his occupation and he started on foot

for the bungalow. On his way, his own servant, an old and trusted man whom he had brought from Benares, asked leave of him for a short time to see a relative of his who lived at a short distance from the village. Mr. Dey said, "All right, but you must come back as soon as you can." He bowed and departed. Mr. Dey walked and reached the bungalow at dusk.

He entered the compound of the bungalow through an outer gate from which some thirty paces off stood the bungalow covered with a tiled slanting roof. He had to mount a few steps which led to the front door, on entering which he found himself in a side-room where the Raja's men greeted him and led him into the hall in the middle of which they had placed a *charpoy* for his bed, and a small writing-table and a single chair, while his baggage and portmanteau had been set down near the wall behind his bed. He was too tired to inspect the house just then, although, on inspecting it the next morning, he found it to contain two large side-rooms, two small side-rooms and the hall which had been arranged for him for the night. As he took his seat in the chair beside the table, the Raja's men asked permission to go and arrange for his dinner which they would bring later on. Mr. Dey said, "All right," and they left.

The Raja had provided him with two kerosene lamps, one burning in the hall and the other in the side-room through which he had come to the hall. He thought the light not quite bright and got up and, taking out a candle from his portmanteau, lighted it and placed it in a holder on the table. The candle was a large and thick one and its pretty big flame threw a bright light around the room. This cheered him and led him to think that, if he had not persisted in his request for the bungalow, he would have been very miserable that night, inside one of the hovels in which the Raja had asked him to lodge, and he laughed within himself at the idea of such a house being called

haunted, despite all the look of concern and seriousness with which the Raja had assured him it was. In sober truth, he had taken the Raja to be as credulous and superstitious as most up-country Hindus and expected no more to see a ghost within those walls than in any other place. It was an utter folly, he concluded, to consign such a decent place of habitation to such neglect, disuse and disrepair because of what a few imaginative cowards had fancied to have seen in it and gossiped about.

Now let us tell the story in the very words of Mr. Dey : "I do not remember how long I kept thinking in this strain until I recollected having promised to write to my brother the result of my first interview with the Raja and a description of my duties and responsibilities. I rose from my chair and getting some writing materials from my trunk placed them upon the table, resumed my seat in the chair and began to write the letter. I had not proceeded far when I heard some voices outside the bungalow towards the front door, and presently some of the Raja's men entered the room with my dinner and, after placing it in a corner, *salaamed* (saluted) me before departing, when I asked them if they had seen my own servant return from his visit to the relative. They answered in the negative. I then told them to send him to me immediately he returned. They nodded and said they would do as I bade them, and departed.

The one thing I noticed in these fellows was their look of gravity, not unmingled with fear, and the hurry in which they seemed always to beg leave to quit the place. This was, of course, as could be expected of the ignorant classes of people to which these servants belonged considering the bad name the bungalow had got, and so their mysterious demeanour did not affect me very much.

I have said that the hall in which I sat had two side-rooms along its length and two along its breadth. The table was placed in the middle of the hall and

as I sat in the chair, beyond the other side of the table, just in front of me was the middle door of the side-room by which I had entered the hall, which door corresponded to the front door. This middle door in front of me stood open, while all the other doors remained shut. The small rooms situated to my left and my right had each one door between them and the hall, while the large rooms at my back and in my front had each three doors, and all remained shut except the one in front of me leading on to the front door.

I resumed the writing of the letter and had almost come to the end of it when I perceived and heard the closed door of the room to my left open about a foot and a half and, as I looked at it, I distinctly saw it was opened by a dark brown hand covered from the wrist up to the elbow (up to which point only it was visible) with a black coat sleeve. As I was looking at it, it vanished. This made me suspicious that somebody must be concealing himself in that room for the purpose of playing pranks upon and frightening me when I slept. I got on my legs at once and, **snatching** up the candle from the table, proceeded towards the room and entered it.

To my surprise, there was nobody in that room. Man, beast or bird, there was no living thing in it, or even dead for that matter. It was entirely bare and empty, and what was more, it had no other door on any other side except two skylights, small and secured by pretty close iron gratings, high up near the ceiling, in the wall opposite to the door.

This disappointing discovery made me rather uneasy. There, indeed, could be no mistake about my seeing the black-sleeved hand. It was so distinct and I had the opportunity to look at it for full five seconds at least, before it was withdrawn, with the candle light full upon it. What could it then be? Whose was it? Was it then only a delusion? If so, who had opened the door? The suggestion struggled to rise within me—it might be the work of the breeze, I smiled

inwardly at it for I felt no perceptible breeze blowing in the rooms just then or before. All the same, no other explanation of the phenomenon could be got, try, however, I might, than that of the deluded eye and the breeze, and so I came out of the room, shutting the door completely and carefully after me, and sat again at the table for finishing the letter.

As I wrote, I kept glancing every now and again at the closed door of the mysterious room as if expecting some fresh phenomenon. My mind was undoubtedly disturbed and it was with difficulty that I could collect my thoughts and form my ideas to transcribe them in the last few lines of the letter, so that it must have been more than twenty minutes before I found myself about to sign my name. Now I was startled and, looking in the direction of that door, saw both its panels open their widest and instantly a man, dressed in a pair of pajama, a black coat and a white turban, come through it into the hall and, advancing towards me two or three steps, bend the upper part of his body low, raise his right hand to his forehead and make three *salaams* to me with all the reverence and submission one could expect from an obedient up-country servant. As he was doing this, I further remarked that he wore also the usual *chaprasi's* sash with a badge hung from the left shoulder across the chest. But the most remarkable thing about him was his face which, though copper-coloured, as it appeared to be in complexion, seemed to be totally expressionless, that is looked more like that of a dead man than of one alive. This unusual or unearthly look in his face sent a shudder through my frame; and even as I sat gazing at him, he turned on his heels, walked noiselessly back into the room and vanished.

I heaved a deep sigh, and a greater sense of terror than what I had felt when the figure stood before me, took possession of me. Then the Raja's fears and warnings rushed into my mind and for the first time

I came to think that my position was full of danger. But what was I to do now? I was alone, aye, not even my own servant was with me. I was expecting the fellow to come back from his relative since ever so long. The rascal was perhaps sleeping in his relative's place, quite forgetful of my need and danger. I inwardly swore at the man and resolved to teach him well when he turned up; unless he had gone to sleep, he must, I thought, be coming back to me.

Meanwhile what was I to do? Should I remain in the house or run away? No, run away, I should not. It would look so cowardly after all my vaunt to the Raja about my courage. But even if I were prepared to risk the shame, it was a long way off. To run from the bungalow to the village, quite a mile and a half, and then to rouse the men. But whom to rouse? I did not know any of the Raja's men by name, nor knew where they lived. No, no, it won't do. I must stay where I was and await further developments, whatever their risk and danger.

Thus fortifying my shaken spirits with such poor materials, I tried to wear the best face I could upon the situation. It was then about midnight and my dinner stood yet untasted where it had been left in the corner. I could scarcely think of eating it, much less feel any appetite which was swallowed up by the extremely uneasy sensation from which I suffered. Indeed, all efforts, to steady my nerves proved futile and at length all that remained for me now was to keep staring at the open door through which the apparition had come out and vanished, while my mind worked incessantly at conjecturing what the next act in this supernatural drama, of which I was the only witness, would be like. And I had to wait long, about two hours, I believe, sitting and staring at the door all the time, my mind distracted by countless thoughts, my imagination conjuring up strange and horrid scenes.

Once or twice towards the end of this long torturing interval, I thought of once again entering the room

and examining it with closer attention with a view to find out if there was any possibility of any human agency being at work, say, through some mysterious trap-door in the floor or in any of the walls. But I remembered that the walls were clean and white-washed and that there was nothing suspicious in the smooth bare floor. Besides, the deathly look in the face of the apparition was the best proof that he was nothing which lived in the flesh. Presently, all suppositions were knocked out and any suspicion I had, completely disarmed. Even as I kept staring, the figure of a woman dressed in a white *saree* glided out of the room into the hall until she walked up to my table, just on the opposite side, and turning towards me and bending her head until her chin touched her breast, she joined her hands in an attitude of supplication. I thought she would speak. But she did not utter a word or make the slightest sound. She only stood before me across the table, her open palms joined in earnest appeal, her head drooping on her chest as though in shame. She stood thus for, I believe, full five minutes, and as I stared at her in terror, I saw that she looked every inch an aristocratic Hindu lady, probably of the Kshatriya caste, her limbs were so finely shaped, the features of her face so delicately handsome in spite of the death pallor which also seemed to shroud her fair complexion. This pallor was, however, not so prominently noticeable in her face owing to the fact that it appeared to be smeared with turmeric, as high-class Chhatri women are usually seen to smear their faces, while her hair, done up and parted in the middle, was smoothed down with wax after the fashion of high-caste Hindoo women in these parts of the country. I could not, however, get any clear view of her face or its expression as she kept hanging it down. It seemed to me that she was thus mutely begging of me something she was ashamed to ask openly. And three or four times I tried to put to her the question—"What is it you want?"

I say I tried. Yes, I tried hard to utter the words, but I could not; my tongue stuck to the roof of my mouth out of sheer terror, my mouth was all dry; and try however, I might, backed by the boldness born of desperation and pity for the supplicating figure before me, I could not move my tongue any more than I could move my eyes from the female apparition before me. At the end of five minutes in this position she turned and glided back towards the room from which she had issued with very quick but noiseless steps. There was also one thing very remarkable about her, she walked very quickly and as soon as she had reached the door she turned again and walked back towards me with something in her arms. Before I had time to notice what it was that she carried she reached my table and, on it, she threw down a still-born child.

I started violently, caught the arm of the chair with my left hand and half rose from my seat at the distinct thud of the throwing of the child and the very perceptible shaking of the table and stared down at the child with my eyelids opened their widest, every hair on my head and body standing its straightest. The child lay there, a full-formed child, but for ten seconds only, after which—it vanished! And as I looked up from the table towards the woman, who also was standing beside the table all the while the child lay on the table,—she had vanished too!

I remained in that posture, half risen from my seat, my left hand tightly clutching the left arm of my chair, my feet rooted to the floor where I stood, my head turned to my left and my eyes fixed upon the half-lighted gloom of the mysterious room, when from it came out again the first apparition—the *chaprasi*—and made for me. My mind and eyes were both dazed and the only thing which I felt working in me was a mighty effort against swooning. Meanwhile, the figure came up to the table, took the candle up in his right hand, and with the left beckoned

me to follow him, as he advanced towards the open door of the side-room through which I had entered the bungalow. My mind now worked with lightning-speed. Should I follow as I was bid, or remain where I was? If I did the former, I thought, he might lead me to some danger or kill me. But something whispered again, so far both the male and the female apparitions had been rather submissive than aggressive in their behaviour, and if I refused to follow the *chaprasi* now, it might anger him and lead him to harm me. These thoughts flashed through me within a few seconds and my mind was made up, for there was no other alternative but to do his bidding.

I followed him as he led me across the side-room, and out into the open ground, through the front-door and down the steps, with the candlestick still held in his hand. It was a bright moonlit night and a gentle breeze was blowing which cooled my brain a little as I mechanically walked behind the ghost. He made for a jack—tree which stood in front of the bungalow a little to the right. Reaching within three or four feet of its trunk, he placed the candle on the ground, pointed to me in an earnest manner the top of the tree with his right hand and then bending low scratched the ground, near the place where he had placed the candle with the fingers of the same hand as if to indicate that both the top of the tree and the ground at its foot had some mystery concealed. He then drew up, turned on his heels and glided back towards the front door of the bungalow. I watched his retreating figure till he went up the steps, entered the front door and disappeared.

I then turned my eyes from the bungalow to the candle and sat in the open air gazing at its flickering flame for how long I do not now remember. I had no wish any more to see any fresh phenomenon from the other world in which I had hitherto no sort of belief whatever. Those I had already seen within the last few hours were enough for my nerves which had

now been tried to their utmost. I now thought of nothing but the morning as I squatted down there on the grass beside the candle. It must be more than a couple of hours that I sat there, cooled by the breeze and reassured by the moonlight in which everything around me was brightly bathed.

Suddenly I started as I heard some voices behind me, and, as I turned round, I saw four sturdy fellows with huge sticks in their hands approaching and *salaaming* me. Before I uttered a word, one of them informed me that they had been sent by the Raja at night to keep watch in the bungalow against any harm that might come to me and that they had been keeping watch all night at different points of the house. But now finding *huzoor* (that is myself) sitting under the jack-tree, they had come up to ask if I had come to any harm or had been frightened. This made me laugh as I saw through their lie at once. The fellows had, indeed, been bid by the Raja to watch the bungalow, but, being mortally afraid of it had kept away and after spending the night in sleep at some safe distance had now come to lie and tell me that they had been watching the house all through the night. I told them they were brave fellows, but I had come to no harm. It was now dawn and so I rose from where I sat and entered the bungalow in company with the fellows to pack up my things and leave the house; for, I was not inclined to have a taste of another night's apparitions. But I did not like to have the Raja believe that I had got frightened and so the removal was effected as smoothly as possible, the Raja being informed conveniently during the day that the bungalow was too far away from the village and that therefore, I would select one of the houses, shown me on the previous day. This was done before evening, my run-away servant having returned in the meantime, making all sorts of excuses helped me in the removal. It appeared he had been frightened by his relative whom he had gone to visit from passing the night in the bungalow, but I made no fuss about

it, keeping a discreet silence all through, answering even the Raja evasively when he asked me if I had seen anything overnight.

Days went by and I proceeded with the duties of my post as if nothing had happened to disturb my mind. I could not, however, help making enquiries about the bungalow and its previous occupants whenever an opportunity offered in the hope of finding a clue to the strange phenomena I had witnessed. Gradually I came to know what I believed the root of the story, for the things I learnt appeared to offer a satisfactory explanation of the strange scenes in the haunted house. I was informed that the house had passed from the hands of the indigo-planter who was its first possessor into the possession of a tolerably well-to-do family of the village in satisfaction of an unpaid debt. The family consisted of a mother and her grown up son with his wife. Soon after they had got possession of and moved into the house, the son got convicted of a penal offence and was sentenced by the District Court to one year's rigorous imprisonment. During his absence his young wife unfortunately contracted a *liaison* with a good-looking *Khitmudgar* of the house and got *enciente*. Her husband, on his return from prison, after his term was over, discovered how things stood, whispers about which had reached the poor fellow when he was serving out his term in the jail. The reports having been confirmed by what he saw, in wild fury his first act on his return was to kick his wife in the stomach which caused an instantaneous miscarriage, the child being a still-born one and the mother dying soon after. The stabbing of the offending *Khitmudgar* was a natural sequence to this tragedy and it did not take more than a few minutes to follow the first scene of horror. The story goes that all three, the dead wife, the *Khitmudgar* and the still-born child were buried deep at the foot of the jack-tree to which the ghost had led me; and though many suspected no one was inclined to utter any whisper about how and where the young woman and her paramour had disappeared.

It was generally understood that they had eloped. The young man and his mother died natural deaths in their respective times and there are now only the apparitions to give a clue to a mournful tale to the unwary stranger who might pass a night in the haunted bungalow."

A Thrilling Incident

The following thrilling story was told us by a friend,—a Barrister of the Calcutta High Court. Educated in England he had lost all faith, not only in an after-world but in God. The incident that not only he but three others saw converted him to a most pious believer. So the spectacle, which it was his privilege to witness, benefited him immensely. It did him one harm however; previously he had no fear of ghosts, but he acquired it after this experience. In fact, when he related the story to us it seemed as if he was shivering with a nameless terror, and was still under the spell of his horrible experiences.

It was in the year 1901, our Barrister friend, with some friends, all cultured and educated men, went to pass the *Dusserah* vacation at Hazaribag. They rented a bungalow and messed together. They were, of course, leading a quiet pleasant life in the enjoyment of friendly companionship,—far removed from the bustle and turmoil of the city, and the troubles and vexations incident to their occupations in life, till at last the mind of the Barrister was troubled slightly on account of an incident, the rationale of which he could not, however, explain.

One day, only a couple of days after their arrival, towards the close of evening, he suddenly found a woman,—for as such it seemed to him—all covered with a sheet of cloth, who appeared to pass in front of him. The apparition was so clear, so distinct, that he wanted to know at once who she was. Before, however,

he could speak the woman vanished, and on inquiry it was found that there was not the slightest chance of any woman coming that way. He, therefore, tried to explain away his experience as an illusion of the eye.

Three or four days after, he saw the same spectacle, at about the same time, similarly clad, and vanishing before his eyes. This must be a hallucination, again thought he, and he did not allow his mind to be disturbed by the vision.

On the following day, however, a still more curious incident happened. Piteous howls of jackals and the barking of dogs began to be heard on all sides of the bungalow. Of course there was nothing unusual in the howl of a jackal or the barking of a dog, but somehow or other the sound seemed so unearthly that it impressed all of them. Now, according to Hindu ideas, such wails, coming from certain animals, are sure signs of an impending calamity. But though the Barrister had, by his western education, thoroughly purged his mind of such silly ideas, he was so unaccountably dejected in spirit that he at once wired home to know whether it was all right with everybody there. The reply was that it was all well.

The bungalow rented by the Barrister had a large hall in the centre with a room on one side, used as a dressing and store-room. This room was closed on all sides. About 8 or 10 days after the above incident something was heard to fall with a crash in that particular room. On entering, some pieces of stone were found lying on the floor. There was not a single window, not even a small hole in any of the four walls of the room, so it was inexplicable how the stones came to be there.

On the following day, at exactly the same hour, a similar sound of something falling was heard, and on examination they were found as before to be some bits of stone. It was suggested by some that it might be the work of birds. The next day while the Barrister

was coming out of the bath-room adjoining the one alluded to above, a big cow-bone fell clanking at his feet. He at once removed and concealed it so that others might not be frightened by this strange incident. For, it is widely believed that earth-bound souls do pelt cow-bones, why,---they alone know best.

The day following the above incident, one of the friends of the Barrister repaired to the room to dress. He was a strong man and knew not what fear was. He, however, suddenly emerged from the room and gave out that he was feeling frightened. At this, those present began to ridicule him for his weakness. About this time some stones and cow-bones fell on the floor of the dressing-room. They went there with a light to examine the room and saw the stones and bones. They remained there for sometime, though their waiting was not rewarded by any other phenomena. Thereupon all of them decided that there was not a shadow of doubt, that all this was the work of a bird, though no bird was anywhere visible. After having sat up and cogitated over the matter till midnight, they got into their beds. At this point the strong man, spoken of above, wished that a lamp should remain burning in the room throughout the night, otherwise, said he, it would be impossible for him to shake off his terror. But none listened to his entreaties, and putting out the lamp they all went to bed and soon fell asleep. When all were enjoying a sound sleep, the Barrister was suddenly awakened by a sound. He immediately got up and struck a match. The first thing which met his sight was some stones and cow-bones lying scattered on the floor. But his blood was congealed with horror when he next saw the condition of his friend. He found that a slab of stone lay on the breast of his friend, whose wide-open and staring eyes suggested that he was dead. He at once roused the other inmates of the house, removed the stone from the breast of the sufferer, and tried to rouse him, by applying rose-water to his head, sprinkling cold water

on his face and eyes, and fanning him. When this had been continued for sometime, the patient suddenly turned his head, and quickly getting up and opening his eyes so wide that it seemed as if the eye-balls would start out of their sockets, he began addressing those present, in rather an authoritative tone, in the following manner :

"To-day I am determined to teach you a lesson. Beware, you are giving me a lot of trouble. I am making it known in every possible way that I am disturbed by your staying in this bungalow, still you would persist in stopping here. You dare cook meat in the room where I live?"

The Barrister shuddered, he did not know what to do. It was all a puzzle to him. An idea, however, occurred to him at last, which somewhat relieved him. Was his friend making fun? But from the outward appearance and general behaviour of his friend he could not put much faith in this suggestion. For, the spectacle struck terror in their hearts. The Barrister, however, was not given enough time for reflection, as his friend began again in his terror-inspiring voice :

"You seem to think that it is your friend who is now talking to you, and he is playing a joke on you. Isn't it so? Well, there is an end of your friend. He is no more, I have killed him already, and having entered his body, I am now addressing these words to you. The words all come from me, and not from the corpse of your friend." When these words were being uttered, everything—the manner of speaking, the tone, the expression of the face, the gestures etc.—went to convince those present that it was, indeed, not their friend who was talking, but somebody else, who having entered his body was speaking to them in this way.

The Barrister and his companions were bewildered. Was their friend, who had been quite hale and hearty a few hours back. really dead, and killed

by a ghost? And was it possible that he could be killed so easily, and that by an ethereal being like a spirit. And, indeed, did he die without uttering even a groan? No, it was impossible that such a dreadful calamity could happen. But the next moment his mind was filled with despair. He was in a queer fix. For he could plainly see that if the ghost had killed his friend he could not offer any help. All his western education, which had taught him the materialistic doctrines, and all his experiences gathered in foreign travels, would give him no light as how to solve the problem with which he was confronted,—indeed, he found himself in a position of inextricable difficulty.

Just then a middle-aged friend of his, respected by them all on account of his age, thinking discretion to be the better part of valour, sought to soothe the ghost in about the same way that he would his god. With folded hands and an outward expression of the greatest humility, he addressed the spirit thus :

“Will you kindly permit us to ask who you are? It appears that you must be a god. If we have unwittingly done anything wrong, will you not forgive us?”

The ghost replied in very nearly the same thundering voice, though it appeared that it had been mollified a little by the speaker's submissive tone, “This friend of yours committed a great wrong. It is for this reason that I have killed him and entered his body. And mind, if you don't burn his body, reducing it to ashes in course of the night, all of you will lose your lives. So if you care for your own lives, do as I bid you.” On hearing this every one present tried to placate the wrath of the ghost by soft and flattering words. But they produced very little effect. Without minding them, the spirit thundered again : “For your own good I say that you should burn resin (incense) at once, or else there is yet greater trouble in store for you.”

The Barrister replied : "How should we get resin at this late hour of the night?"

The spirit said : "You will find resin in your bag."

Instead of arguing with the spirit,—for our friend was quite sure that there was no such thing there,—the bag was opened and searched. But, as was well known, nothing was found there.

There was, however, a cigar-case in the bag, and when putting things in order the Barrister happened to handle it. The spirit thereupon suddenly exclaimed : "The resin is in that cigar-case."

This small case had, to their knowledge, been packed with cigars, but to the surprise of all, when it was opened, not even one was found. And to their further dismay, it was found to be filled with a kind of yellow dust.

The spirit, who was evidently enjoying their dismay all this while, now said with a smile, "That is incense. Burn this powder before me."

This strange transformation of cigars into a kind of yellow powder simply dumb-founded them all. It had the effect of still further increasing their awe and respect for the ghost. They thought within themselves, that there could be no shadow of doubt it was a ghost that was speaking to them—nay, not only a ghost but a powerful one capable of injuring or favouring them at will. It must, on the other hand, be a ghost with a religious turn of mind or else why should it be disturbed by their cooking meat in the house, and why, again, should it command them to burn incense? These thoughts naturally led them to nourish secret hopes of their friend's resuscitation. For even if the spirit had really killed him it evidently had the power of bringing him back to life. Encouraged by all these considerations, they made all haste in making necessary preparations to burn incense. No sooner, however, had the dust been put into the fire than it emitted a kind of smell which was so dreadfully offensive as to be simply unbearable. The stench

was exactly like what issues from the burning corpse of a man. Only it appeared to be even stronger if possible and the friends felt a strong tendency to nausea. Just then, as if to still further increase the horrors of the scene, another incident occurred. Simultaneously with the issuing out of the stench from this nauseating "incense" there were heard the continuous howls of jackals, the barking of dogs and the hooting of owls, which filled the air on all sides. Here are the exact words of our friend when describing the situation :

"The horrible stench and the hideous noise suggested to us that we had taken up our quarters in a dreadful place, somewhat resembling the cremation-ground of the Hindus. Our mind became void of ideas,—as if our last day had come, and we were getting totally indifferent as to what would happen next.

They were not, however, allowed a long time to remain in this condition. For the spirit awakened them from their stupor by crying out, in mocking tones, "Sweet odour of incense. Do you think I can bear the odour of burning resin? This smell is,—oh ! how sweet, how delightful to me. And do you know why you hear the hooting of black owls? It is to express joy over the death of your friend who is no longer in this world."

These words brought them to their senses and chilled their hearts with fear. Then the spirit spoke once more. It said : "I want to drink liquor. Bring it quickly, or else you suffer the same penalty that your friend has met with."

The Barrister replied : "We have no liquor with us. And there is no chance of getting it anywhere at such a late hour of the night."

The spirit said : "You will find liquor in a bottle there."

There were two empty bottles in the room. One of them, on examination, was found to contain nothing in it, but the other had a liquid substance, somewhat

like liquor. This liquid was poured into a glass, and handed to the influenced gentleman who drank it up at a gulp.

After drinking, the spirit was somewhat pacified, and calling the Barrister by his name said, "You stay with me in this room, and let the others leave it." In fact, they were now so completely under the influence of the spirit that they had not the hardihood to disobey the order. Willing or unwilling, the Barrister consented to the proposal and the others quitted the room, to take up their position in the verandah outside.

The Barrister was a little surprised at this new attitude of the spirit, and naturally expected fresh sensations. But from the present manner of the spirit it however appeared to him that it wanted to communicate something to him in private, and that is why it had asked the others to leave them alone. The spirit began: "Do you want to get your friend back to life? If so, you must promise to do something which I would presently communicate to you."

The Barrister replied, that if the work was not beyond his power, he was prepared to do anything for the life of his friend. The spirit then made the Barrister take a most solemn promise. Then the spirit went on:

"I cannot adequately describe to you the agony of my life. Oh, what a painful existence I am at present leading. You cannot conceive my misery. It appears at times that owing to the anguish of my soul, my heart would be rent to pieces, but still my agony neither ceases nor abates. For a long time past, I have been trying my best to reach you in various ways. Luckily I was enabled to take possession of the body of your friend, and thus speak to you through him. If you had kept a light in the room, it would have been impossible for me to take possession of his body as I have done. But let that pass. Please try to help me, I can not bear the excruciating agony

any longer. Promise that you will go to Gaya and offer *pinda* there in my name. My name is—(woman). At a moment of passion I took opium, and this put an end to my earthly life.”

After saying this much the spirit paused a while, and then continued : “Do you like to see my wonders ? If so, please let me know. I shall try to satisfy you to the best of my power. If you so like, I may bring to your presence some of your dead relations—and that instantly.”

The Barrister was much relieved to be assured that he would get back his friend. He was, however, so much oppressed by excessive fear on account of this series of weird phenomena enacted before his very eyes, that he had no inclination for going further through any fresh chapters of exciting or startling scenes. He was, indeed, so much pleased to get back his friend so cheaply, that the first idea that actuated him was to see his friend all right, as speedily as possible. He therefore earnestly told the spirit that he had no desire to see any fresh wonders, but would be immensely obliged to get back his friend. And he would assuredly offer *pinda* at Gaya on her behalf. On this the spirit said, “You leave this room and go to the verandah. When I leave the body of your friend, you will hear a terror-inspiring sound. But don’t be frightened, or come into the room. But when the sound ceases and everything has quieted down then you may enter the room to find your friend living. But at any cost you must leave this house at once and remember my request.”

Though this was a command to which the Barrister was not willing to submit, viz. to leave his friend alone in charge of a mischievous spirit, but still he felt the utter helplessness of his position. In fact, he clearly found that his safety lay in putting absolute trust in the spirit. So he had no help but to leave behind his friend at its mercy and come out to the verandah. No sooner had he done so than they heard

an unearthly sound from within, so awful that they all trembled with fear. The sound was so weird and unearthly as to paralyse them with fear.

Soon however, all was quiet again, and they came into the room to find their friend lying in an unconscious state. When he was revived at last he complained of extreme weakness, so much so, that he had to be removed in a palanquin from the bungalow the next day. The Barrister and his friends purposely did not acquaint him with all that had happened, after his possession by the spirit. At the earliest opportunity the Barrister went to Gaya to perform the religious ceremonies in the shrine there, as promised by him to the spirit. The *Pandas* (priests) of the shrine, however, said that as he did not belong to the same clan as the woman, he had no right to offer *pinda* for her. But as *Pandas* they could do the work safely, if they got the requisite fees. He thereupon made such arrangements that the ceremonies should be observed in all their varied details without a hitch; and having paid the fees, he left the place.

The Barrister could easily identify the ghost. For he knew that the woman, who had been the mistress of a relation of his, had committed suicide by taking opium.

About a year after the above occurrences, one day at about 10 o'clock at night, the Barrister was talking in the house of one of his friends in Calcutta when, all on a sudden, a daughter of his host, aged about 10 or 12 years, came in from outside and said,—“Father, I am frightened at seeing something, why, I can't say.” She immediately fell down senseless. This, of course, created a stir, and while those present, confounded by the sudden mishap, were trying to collect their wits the girl spoke. Turning to the Barrister, she at first stared at him with blood-shot and fixed eyes. A little while after, she said slowly, “You know who I am, you sit here and ask the others to quit the room.”

The Barrister immediately recalled to mind all that had happened in the bungalow at Hazaribag, a year ago. The way she turned her head and stared at him, at once disclosed to him the cause of the girl's swoon. He knew that the bungalow woman had possessed the girl, and so when she requested all others except himself to go out, he did not see much harm in it. The father of the girl, however, dumb-founded at this sudden change in the condition of his daughter, naturally refused to leave the room. But when the Barrister requested him, quite calmly to leave the room though he did not understand the ethics of such a request, he was persuaded to comply. The girl in a tone which reminded him of the voice he had heard once before, muttered out, "All this time I was following you. The *pinda* offered at Gaya was not performed according to prescribed rules, I am suffering very much still". As soon as an arrangement for a second *pinda* was made, the girl attained the normal condition of her mind. At about this time another incident happened which might have some bearing on the whole story. The relation of the Barrister, who had been the protector of the woman, suddenly died. He suffered only from simple fever for 3 or 4 days, when one day at 10 o'clock at night the physician, who attended him, declared that he was free from fever, and would be all right in a day or two. But still he died in about an hour after the doctor had left.

The young man, who had been possessed by the ghost in the bungalow, suffered for a long time from nervous prostration. He was never told of the pranks that the ghost had played with his body. But since the occurrence he dare not come out of his house after dusk. At night he always keeps a lamp burning in his room, but still he feels, while sleeping, as if somebody is pressing on his breast.

Unluckily the Barrister and his friends had no knowledge of this fact of spirit communion, and the experience was therefore new to them. And thus the horrible and the blood-curdling incidents, that they

saw, only confounded them and rendered them helpless. Otherwise they might have, from these strange incidents, made important discoveries in regard to life in the other world,—discovering more important truths than perhaps made by the greatest savants of the world. For they were face to face with a woman of this earth, who was then an inhabitant of the other world. They could have learnt much about life in the other world if they had tried. But such thoughts never occurred to them; what occupied their thoughts completely was how to save the life of their friend which, it seemed to them, was at the mercy of this ghost. But yet the incident witnessed by four intelligent men, all highly educated, and therefore true in every particular, discloses many strange truths not known to ordinary men. We shall show what we learn by the weird experiences of the Barrister and his friends.

The woman was in the keeping of a relation of the Barrister, and had committed suicide. The result was, she suffered intensely in the other world. As a Hindu, the idea struck her that an offering of Pinda at Gaya would liberate her. For, such is the general Hindu idea. But how to accomplish this? As a woman of the town she had no relations. The Barrister she knew very well; he was therefore regarded by her to be the fittest party to help her. But how to reach him and how to lead him to do this piece of service for her? To reach him, the services of a medium were necessary, for spirits generally cannot communicate with men below without the help of those who have mediumistic powers, natural or acquired. Now it so happened that, the young and strong man of the party had mediumistic powers. So here we find a very favourable circumstance for the woman to accomplish her purpose. She finds the Barrister in company with a medium. Now, it must be known that a spirit cannot, as a rule, take possession of a medium at once, without repeated efforts. When we say, "as a rule,"

we mean to suggest that they sometimes can. Most cases of obsession occur in this way. This is ordained for the protection of man. For, if spirits could thus suddenly take possession of a man without his consent no mortal would be safe. So the woman, finding the Barrister in the desired company of a medium, took advantage of this favourable opportunity.

But yet this was not sufficient; she must not only take possession of the medium but also have a complete control over his mind, without which it would not be possible for her to talk face to face and do other ghostly wonders. So she began to take possession of the medium step by step, as her frequent manifestations would show.

The woman thought that, even if she could speak face to face with the Barrister, it would scarcely be possible for her to induce him to take so much trouble and undergo so much expense for her as to undertake a journey to Gaya; of course, she had the opportunity of appealing to the generosity of the Barrister, but as a public woman she had no good opinion of humanity, so she determined to give him a terrible fright and to place him in an exceedingly difficult position.

Thus, at first, she began to frighten them and make her presence known by various means. She had originally intended posing as a good spirit, and perhaps she had determined to appeal, not only to the fears of the Barrister but also to his feeling of veneration for the ghost. And this led her to complain that they had cooked meat. But this idea of posing as a clean spirit she gave up immediately afterwards, or she would not have craved for drink and showed such fondness for the horrid stench. She spoke the truth when she said that she could not have taken so complete possession of the body of the young man as she did if the light had not been put out; this is one of the laws which control spirit communications. The lower spirits usually need darkness to be able to manifest themselves. When she said that she would bring all

the dead relations of the Barrister, she merely promised to do a thing which it was not in her power to accomplish.

Well, finding it was dark, she took possession of every nerve of the young man, and put a heavy stone upon his breast; and then awakened the inmates with a loud noise. When she said that she had killed the young man she only spoke a falsehood; when she said she would kill all of them she similarly spoke a falsehood. As regards her fondness for the horrid stench, this is one of the punishments of dark spirits. In fact, some of them revel in human ordure, and we know instances to prove this.

The Barrister did his part of the bargain, but yet she did not derive much benefit from the Pinda; so she wanted the lawyer to do it over again in due form. But how to reach him? She was following the Barrister, but yet she could not reach him without a medium. Luckily she found him in company with the girl who had high mediumistic powers and the girl was influenced to serve the purpose of the woman.

Wonderful Manifestations in a Haunted House.

"It was at the end of March or beginning of April, 1905, that, one day, going up to the terrace of the premises No. 8, Aliiritola Street, in North Calcutta, we found a strange sight." So said to us the late Surendra Nath Dhole, B.A., an educated gentleman and author of several religious books, both in English and Bengali.

The premises mentioned above is a godown upon which there are some rooms. The house stands detached in the midst of open lands. So it is exceedingly difficult, if not altogether impossible, for any outsiders to reach the terrace and spend a night in arranging bits of stones, without being found out. The

only way to go there is through the room where the inmates used to sleep. Of course any burglar might have entered the room by the staircase and, stealthily going up to the terrace, played a purposeless prank with stones; but this would, for many reasons, seem an impossible supposition. Yet the idea of ghosts never entered the mind of anyone; on the other hand, the inmates of the house soon after forgot all about the incident.

Two or three days after they had noticed the stones on the terrace, they saw a sight which took their breath away. They found on the same terrace an earthen pitcher with water in it, painted with vermillion, and with flowers strewn about. It seemed that some one had worshipped the deity Kali, for such is the way the goddess is worshipped by the Hindus. The earthen pitcher, the water, the vermillion, the flowers—all indicated that some one had been to the terrace, and had worshipped the goddess at dead of night, while the inmates of the house were all asleep. But two circumstances struck them with infinite surprise.

How could any one reach the top without passing through the room where the inmates slept without disturbing them?

Of course, there was the chance of worshippers coming from outside. But this seemed well-nigh impossible. The house, as has been said, was a tall one, with open lands on all sides. One could have got to the top with the help of a gigantic ladder, but the inmates had to give up this ladder theory. For, subsequent events showed unmistakably, that the pitcher had been taken up and the goddess was worshipped, not by a man of this sphere, but by a ghost.

Another circumstance struck the occupants as extraordinary. Some of the flowers, used in worshipping the goddess, were strange to them, they having never seen such flowers before. At least, the flowers

were exceedingly rare. However, the ghost did not leave the inmates long in doubt as to the origin of these mysterious incidents; for, immediately after, stones began to fall frequently, inside and outside of the house, day and night.

There was a man posing as a sadhu, that is to say, a man of religion, who offered his advice. He said it was the work of a spirit-worshipper of Kali who ought not to be disturbed. His advice was that the good-will of the spirit should be secured, and the 'thing' supplied with necessary materials for his worship. "Let flowers, food, etc." said he, "be kept there. If this be done, the 'thing' will not molest the inmates". In accordance with this advice the necessary articles were put near the pitcher; and while this was being done, the pious man addressed the invisible being in these words: "We keep these things for you. Do please use them without ceremony and partake of the food and thereby confer on us infinite obligation." He further requested the ghost to leave a small quantity of the food for the use of the inmates of the house. He believed that the residue of the food, used for devotional purposes, called "prasad," would spiritually benefit those who might partake of it.

The obligation was conferred in a right royal manner by the ghost. Not only were the flowers used in worship, but a portion of the food also was partaken. Of course, any nightbird or cat might have eaten the food; but it was not so, as one could see from many indications; on the other hand it was the work of an intelligent and rational being. For the flowers etc. and the food were kept covered by a basket with a heavy weight placed upon it by the inmates of the house. In the morning it was found that during night-time, by removing the weight on the basket the flowers, etc. had been used for worship and a portion of the food partaken. Then the used articles had again been put under the basket with the weight upon it. It was observed that fresh water was added to the pitcher

every day, so that the pitcher always remained full. Though food and flowers were daily kept there by the inmates of the house yet the spirit used to bring unknown flowers of his own accord. At last in order to catch the ghost red-handed, the inmates stationed themselves on the terrace, but so long they remained there, nothing happened. Sometimes they would hear a rumbling noise up-stairs and run up to see nothing. In this way they began to disturb the ghost in his act of worship. And the result was that though the ghost was manifesting his presence in various ways, evidently he had no desire to perform the worship before company or shew himself. But only on one occasion he appeared to a man below. One night an itinerant sadhu came and stayed in the godown as a guest. In the morning he declared that at night a hideous figure shewed itself to him, and threatened him with its displeasure if he remained there. So the sadhu left the house precipitately. Of course, there was no other proof of this incident beyond the declaration of the sadhu.

So long the ghost had done the inmates no positive harm. Of course he was pelting stones day and night, but he did nothing to cause any serious mischief. Yet the occupants of the house very naturally did not want his company, in short, they wanted to get rid of him; for, who can bear to see the laws of nature constantly outraged? They are taking their meals, and there falls in their midst a big stone which frightens and startles them. It was, in this and other ways, indicated that he was constantly in the midst of the inmates of the house. In fact, they could not sit alone in a room even in broad daylight for fear of getting a fright. At night it appeared as if pandemonium had been let loose. When they were in bed, they heard that the ghost was walking on the terrace. Sometimes while sleeping a man's pillow was snatched away and he was beaten with it, of course gently. The fact is, that a ghost, however harmless, can never be an agreeable companion to a man below.

So a ghost-doctor was brought, for the purpose of expelling the unwelcome visitor. This man tried to expel the thing ; the methods he adopted need not be described ; but he could do nothing, except this, that those present heard whispers, as if some one was speaking. That the sound proceeded from the ghost was probable. Yet as this doctor could do nothing more, it served no useful purpose. On the other hand he highly exasperated the ghost by his futile efforts to expel it. For, the result was that the disturbances increased ten-fold.

This appearance of the ghost-doctor made the case worse, for the ghost now began to manifest himself more frequently and more mischievously. The inmates at last found themselves in this position that either they must expel the ghost or they themselves must vacate the house. They therefore brought another ghost-doctor who had the reputation of dealing with dark spirits of the lower degree. But like the former he also was a failure.

It was not only Surendra Babu and other inmates of the house who saw the manifestations but hundreds of others. The manifestations were seen for months together, and at every hour of, not only night but day. So it is impossible to attribute them to any but occult causes. And how is it possible to suggest trickery when an intelligent and educated man like Mr. Dhole and many others saw manifestations like the following? "Thus," says Mr. Dhole, "a brick, lying idle, rises before our eyes and then it is made to smash the cooking-pot in which rice was being boiled for our meal ; a water-pot in this manner rises by itself and pours its contents upon the cooking-place and put out the fire, bricks dancing in open daylight before our eyes ; tin canisters in this manner dancing as if they had gone mad. No, sir, it is impossible to attribute the manifestations to physical causes or trickery." What then they saw was this that some force was playing mad pranks. What was this force? It was invisible

though it was constantly in their midst. The force has intelligence, and this it shews in every way. A mere force cannot worship Kali. Nay it is more of a wag. "I don't believe in ghosts," says one and immediately a brick is broken to pieces before him by an invisible force. It is always in the midst of the inmates of the house, and hears what they say. It has strength enough to carry an earthen pitcher to the terrace. It can break a solid and compact brick to pieces. It can bring strange flowers from the jungles from a great distance. It can bring water from the river. Besides it shews itself well aware as to how Pujah should be performed with earthen pots, vermillion, flowers, etc., and gets ready all the requisites. So there cannot be any manner of doubt that the force was nothing else than the ghost of a man, a Hindu, who had died or in other words this haunted house proves that men do not die, that is to say, there is survival after death.

There is, of course, one small element of doubt in these manifestations, namely, was it a ghost of a man or some other creation of God? But this doubt, foolish as it is, was subsequently removed. The above account has a sequel, for Mr. Dhole says: "A ghost-doctor, that is to say a strong psychical medium, was brought in who had this ghost expelled before them." Let us remark here *en passant* that in India psychical mediums do not avail themselves of the services of cabinets. They shew ghosts in such manner as to leave no doubt that they really do what they propose to do.

My Lost Mother

More than ten years ago a Matric school, called "Probodh Memorial School," was established at No. 27/F, Baloram Ghose Street, in Shambazar, North Calcutta. The proprietor of the school is Srijut Abhoy Pada Bhattacharji. The school has a

history behind it which had its origin in a supernatural phenomenon. What it is, will be clear from the account written by Srimati Indira Devi, Mr. Bhattacharji's daughter, given below :

"My mother departed for her heavenly home on November 24, leaving behind two daughters and our father. My youngest sister being quite a child pined and fretted for mother terribly. All of us were deeply aggrieved over her premature death. My father was almost demented and the only time he seemed to find a little comfort was when he took the little one in his arms.

About three weeks after her death, on December 12, at about 10-30 A.M., my father left for office, and I went to call my little sister for her morning meal, but I was surprised to find her asleep on a sofa at this unusual hour. Just at the moment I was about to shake her up I heard a sound behind me, and looking round I found the shadowy form of my dead mother standing by the side of another sofa and copiously shedding tears. Spontaneously I cried out, "Mother, is that you?", to which she replied in a low voice, "Yes, it is me. Shut the door and sit down, I have got somewhat to tell you."

My sister was still fast asleep. I gently shut the door and coming alongside of my mother sat on a chair and said: "Mother, how can you be so heartless as to keep away from us? Don't you feel any desire to see us? Your separation is becoming unbearable to us. Don't go away again please, mother. Say you won't?" When I put forth my hands to clasp her, she instantly drew back saying, "Don't touch me, child. Do you think I am wilfully living apart from you all? My pangs of separation are beyond description, but it cannot be helped. Be that as it may, now listen to what I say. Your father is in imminent danger of his life. I have come here to give timely warning. Please tell him so."

"Father has gone to his office," said I "how shall I tell him?" On which my mother smiled and said: "He will return presently as he has left his purse behind."

Turning round I saw his purse actually lying on the table. At that very moment my father called out to me and approached the door. I got up, opened the door and told him that mother was there. My father was struck all of a heap and faltered out: "What—did—you—say?"

"Yes, father," I answered, "it is true. Come in and see for yourself. I had been talking so long to her."

Thereupon my father rushed into the room and glanced round. At first my mother did not catch his eye, whereupon he shouted, "Where is she?" and then noticing her shadowy form on the sofa he asked in a tremulous voice, "Is that you?"

At this tears rolled down her cheeks. Father was about to sit on the same sofa by her side when I checked him saying, "Don't sit there. Mother said we are not allowed to touch her now."

Father then sat on a separate chair and before he could frame a single word, mother said: "I have got something to tell you. This being your office hour you are thinking you are already too late, but no harm will come to you for it. Your office-master most likely will be involved in a collision on his way which will keep him from office till 12 o'clock."

"How do you know it?" asked my father quite bewildered. "I know it," she replied with ever the faintest smile in the world on her lips. "Now listen to what I have come to say." I cannot give details of all that passed between them but suffice it to say that she told him that his life was in great danger and also the way how to come out of it unscathed.

To his question, why she was weeping, mother answered that it was due to her enforced separation,

from him and her children, that was also the reason for her coming there that day.

When she was about to depart I burst out crying which again brought tears to her eyes, and she said, "Don't cry, darling." I entreated her again not to go away, but she sobbingly said that could not be. She promised, however, to come and visit us now and then.

Then sending me out of the room, mother and father had a private talk between themselves of which I do not know anything. When father came out of the room I heard from him that mother had left.

On his return home that evening I heard from father that his office-master's (Saheb's) carriage had actually collided with another vehicle on that morning but fortunately no one was hurt.

After this I and my father frequently invoked my mother's spirit according to her directions. No one else knew anything about this.

The spirits used to come and possess the sleeping body of one of my uncles, my maternal grandmother and myself and of no other.

One evening I saw my medium uncle asleep in a room, and I was tempted to invoke my mother's spirit. I forgot that father was not present, but after invoking the spirit in the manner my father did I started talking. A few minutes after, suddenly I felt like rising in the air with the cot I was sitting on. My uncle was sleeping as before. The cot gradually rose right up to the ceiling and dropped with a crash. This happened three or four times and then the cot remained stuck to the ceiling and I felt I was being strangled. Simultaneously I heard a strange voice whispering in my ear. "What a lesson I have taught you! don't do it again."

Suddenly I recalled my mother's warning not to invoke spirits without the holy water of the Ganges, and preferably not outside the pujah-room. If a spirit be unavoidably invoked in any other place, the

person invoking must be in a perfectly pure state of mind, otherwise there was a chance of evil spirits coming in and the life of the medium might be endangered. The moment this thought crossed my mind I heard the piteous voice of my mother raised in warning and advice. When the cot dropped to the floor next time I hurried out of the room and fetched a tumblerful of Ganges water and sprinkled it all over the room. The strange voice then said, "Your mother's kindness has saved you this time." I was overjoyed at this narrow escape.

The evil spirit having departed, I woke up my uncle. I did not invoke my mother's spirit at all that night again. My uncle was quite unaware of what had passed during his sleep. He merely said that he was feeling out of sorts—perhaps because of his untimely sleep.

I did not tell anything to my uncle but told father all when he returned home. "You nearly brought on a catastrophe," gravely observed my father, "never do it again."

Another day when my father and myself were talking with my mother after my maternal grandmother had fallen asleep my mother suddenly wanted to bid us farewell. "Why so early, mother?" said I rather surprised. Mother did not reply but said something to my father. As I was at a little distance, I could not catch her words.

My father said: "My younger brother has come. Would you like to speak to him?" When my uncle left this world I was a baby-in-arms. He died a year after my birth. But I have heard many things about him. So I said that I would, but I felt somewhat shy in speaking to him. But my grandmother who was now the medium said, "Darling, what are you thinking about? Is it not about what you will say to me, one whom you never spoke to in your life?"

What shall I say? Truly, that was exactly what was passing through my mind. I was astonished to

find that the spirits could even read our mind. Whatever that might be, my uncle began to speak. After some talk, it struck me that I should ask him if I could offer him anything. He said he had no objection, and assured me that he would not only take the eatables but would leave marks of his eating. With this, he gave me instructions as to the place where and how the food was to be kept and then left.

On the next evening I placed some viands for him in a fresh earthen pot and put it inside the wall-almirah of the room after washing it thoroughly with Ganges water. *Rabri* (thickened milk) was his favourite dish and for that he earned the title of a glutton. So I kept some quantity of *rabri*, and other sweets and Ganges water and covered them up with earthen plates and then locked the almirah. At night-fall I purified the almirah by burning incense.

On thing I should mention here that at noon of the same day two maid-servants were preparing balls with cowdung and coal-dust on the roof for fuel. I was there at that time when I heard somebody whisper, "I will leave it as a mark." I was surprised but could not find anyone anywhere.

Next morning when I opened the almirah, I found the covers were exactly in the same position as they had been kept the day before, so at first I felt rather dubious but on removing them I found to my utter amazement that the dishes were empty and there were only three balls prepared from cowdung and coal the previous day, one in each dish. I was completely flabbergasted and related everything to my father.

Some people have ascribed it to rats but I can only assure them that the very position in which the food was kept makes it impossible for even a fly or a mosquito, and not to speak of a rat, to reach it.

The father of the writer of the article, Srijiut Abhoy Pada Bhattacharya, has attached the following note at the end: "My daughter, Srimati Indira

Devi, has shown the article to me before forwarding it to the press. It is evident that my daughter has written the account of some of the happenings from November, 24, 1914, the date of her mother's death, to January 1915. Every incident is perfectly true and correct, but there was no need for its publication. The date of my wife's (Srimati Probodhbala's) ascension to Heaven is 24th November, 1914, and her first manifestation was on 12th December, 1914, and her first words were "How are you?" accompanied by copious tears. I remember it perfectly well even now.

Doctor's Weird Experiences

A scientific man and Assistant Surgeon in Government service, sent to the Hindu Spiritual Magazine a communication narrating some incidents regarding the death of his dearly beloved wife and her life beyond. The following is the sum and substance of it. The doctor wrote that his wife lay dangerously ill; he was attending on her when suddenly he found her muttering something, and on close attention heard her speaking as follows :

"Oh, don't take me away so soon. I am not yet prepared to die. I have yet my daughter to marry and little children to take care of." She stopped for a while, as if to hear the reply, and then continued : "Of course, in that case I don't mind for my children; but my husband,—my dear husband,—what will become of him? Who will console him?" A slight pause, and again she spoke : "You would take him too! Oh, never; that can't be. You want to take away the bread-winner of the whole family! Oh, save me from the curses of my father-in-law and mother-in-law who will die too if their son is taken away in their old age. I would rather wait for him alone for any number of years. Don't be so cruel, oh!" Another pause, after which she again said : "If you

can do that,—if you say that he shall not suffer on account of my absence, then I have no objection to die and go over to you. But promise before you take me away.”

The doctor was staggered. Grave misgivings filled his mind. He now felt sure of something which he had only had a glimpse of before. He questioned her immediately, but she made no reply. Twenty four hours before her death, addressing her husband she said :

“You are not giving me plenty of cocoanut-water though the Kaviraj (physician) has asked you to do so. Very well. Remember that I die to-morrow at this hour of the day.”

The doctor said that he was prepared for this and calmly listened. The next day, at exactly the same hour as foretold by her, she breathed her last.

He further said that, strange as it may appear, her death did not grieve him so much as he had expected. She was, of course, very dear to him, and his anxiety knew no bounds when she was overtaken by illness and got gradually worse. But when she was gone he could easily bear up with this heavy calamity, as if nothing had happened. And what was the reason? Her strange conversation with an invisible being on that dreadful night, followed by the strange manner in which she predicted the hour of her death and several other circumstances, convinced him that she was not dead. In fact, he began to feel her presence now and again.

Besides the incident described above, she had a vision about five months before her death, in which she saw a female figure, whom she understood to be a goddess, expressing her intention to take her away from this world. On that occasion she described, in a loud voice, all that she saw before several persons, though herself quite unconscious. She, however, requested the goddess of her dream to wait for some-time more, till she had got her daughter married.

The next conversation with the goddess took place just before her death. It appears, the goddess had assured her that her death would not touch her children in any way. And, indeed, this actually happened, for the children including a tiny baby, did not pine on her account nor did they weep for her. They began to behave as if their mother did not die at all. They appeared to be always protected by an invisible agency, and they were not in need of being specially looked after. And, strange as it may appear, they had never any serious illness after their mother's death.

Since her death the doctor had always been thinking of opening communication with her. But as she had died only a short time before, he did not dare. After the *Sradh* ceremony was over, he gathered some information regarding the formation of spiritual circles, and, with the scanty knowledge he had on the subject, sat down one day with his children and a brother, seven persons in all, and awaited developments. Within a few minutes, his second son, a boy of 13, who was much beloved of her, showed signs of being influenced. He said: "There is mother in her red-bordered *saree*," He could not say anything more, but became unconscious and began to breathe heavily. Being a novice in this business, the doctor naturally became a little alarmed and, without giving the boy sufficient time to get into a deep trance, he began to ask his son questions in the following manner:

Q.—Who are you?

A.—Have you forgotten me so soon?

Q.—Are you B——? (meaning his wife)

A.—Yes.

Q.—How are you?

A.—Much better.

Q.—Where are you now?

A.—I know not. The place is all dark.

Q.—Do you find there anybody else?

A.—No.

Q.—Do you see the goddess there whom you saw in your dream?

A.—No. (a little after) Pray with me. (her husband began to chant a *mantram*. This *mantram* was repeated by the medium.)

Q.—Do you now see anything?

A.—Yes, I see a light.

Q.—Repeat the *mantram*.

The medium did it and said, "Yes, it is mother (the goddess) coming near me in all her glory. I am happy now. (A short while after) Why did you not give me sufficient water to drink?

Her husband replied that he gave her plenty of water. "But that was not enough," said she, "I want more. Give me water of twenty cocoanuts."

"How can I give now?" replied her husband.

"Give me on the next *Sradh* day through both 'G' (1st son) and 'N' (2nd son)."

Q.—Do you still bear the same love towards us?

A.—Yes, certainly. Do you doubt it?

Q.—Can you tell me anything about your children?

A.—I can't say definitely. Probably 'N' will be a good boy after 16. I may get the little child here after 3 years. (This prediction was not fulfilled.)

A few more questions were asked and she answered them to the satisfaction of the doctor. Afterwards he asked her: "So you do not like to communicate with us always?" To this she gave the following answer:

"Yes, but do not hold circles very often. I can come once a week. It pains me very much to come into N's body. Don't you see he is suffering? I must not remain long. Please pay a visit to Bisvanath's Temple at Benares. You will find there something which will interest you." Saying this she went away.

Agreeably to her direction the doctor went to Benares and put up at his sister's place. She expressed great surprise on seeing him there without any previous intimation and then related the following story :

"Brother, last night at about 11 P.M. after I had just retired, I saw *Bowdidi* (alluding to the wife of her brother) in my room. A bright lamp was burning, so I could see everything very clearly. She looked exactly as she was in the flesh, with the only difference that she had a new ornament on her neck which I never saw her wear before. She seemed very cheerful and appeared with a smiling countenance. I, at first, got very much frightened at seeing the apparition of a dead person and did not know whether I was dreaming or wide-awake. I rubbed my eyes and looking again, found her slowly approaching me. I called aloud : "Are you *Bowdidi*?" She replied, "Don't be frightened, I will not do any harm." So saying she caught hold of my wrist and I distinctly felt her grip. Then she sat on this corner of the Chowki (here she pointed out the place) and began to talk with me. How long we talked I cannot say, but it was undoubtedly a long time. In fact, we talked so freely that gradually I forgot I was talking with a dead person. She talked on various topics and even told me something which, she said, none but you know. (Here my sister related to me some secrets communicated by my wife which really were not known to anybody else). She also said : "To-morrow you will find why I am so jolly." And this is the reason why I expressed my surprise at seeing you to-day at Benares. After she vanished from my sight, I examined the doors and windows all of which I found bolted and locked like before."

However, according to the direction of his wife, the doctor repaired to Visvanath's Temple at night and took his seat in a corner of the *Nat Mandir*. He sat there in a serious mood. Gradually the place

became quieter, and it seemed he went into a sort of trance while contemplating the image of Visvanath. All the external world was effaced from him and he did not even hear the sounds of the temple at the time. Suddenly, the doctor lost sight of the temple and saw several wonderful things. When he came back to consciousness he could not recollect all. But those that he still vividly remembered he narrated below :

“First of all, I saw several images of gods and goddesses around me. Then I began to see beautiful scenes hanging in the sky upside down. There was a nice road and people were walking on it with their heads hanging downwards. Afterwards the scene changed into a panorama, this time not upside down. There were beautiful palaces, gardens etc., all made of gold and silver, and crystal rivulets running through them, the water of which flowed like liquid mercury. Silver birds, silver trees, etc., with fruits on them of different sizes and colours were there. The scene now began to change assuming more and more superb and gorgeous appearance, indeed, it became such as to defy all description. There were, however, no other living creatures to be seen except the birds. After sometime I found myself in a big hall where some dark and thin shadows were seen walking about in a manner which bespoke their great pain. Each of them was found to have something like a load hanging over their breasts. Some of them looked at me but did not speak. The hall was dark and had a sombre look but there was sufficient light to see. After a few minutes I saw a small light at the extreme end of the hall which approached me slowly and grew in intensity as it drew nearer till it became as brilliant as an electric light. The scene suddenly changed.

“I now found myself in a field where there were a large number of wells in a row, just one after the other. Each well had a broad yellow-coloured tape across it. On one side of the wells, to my left, there were found myriads of creatures, human beings,

animals, reptiles, birds etc., struggling to go across the wells. I found them looking into the wells and jump into them never to rise again. Some human beings in their attempt to cross the wells got entangled in the tape and afterwards succeeded in coming to the other side. All those who succeeded in crossing over looked brighter and happier and immediately vanished from sight.

"Then I found myself in a garden in front of a small tank, adorned with delightfully fragrant flowers and quite charming to look at. In the centre of that tank there was a large *lingam* of Siva made of a sort of glittering stone from which flashed out different degrees of lustre. On the right side of that tank there was a palm-tree under which I saw my figure, perfectly naked, fervently praying. Everything now vanished from my sight and I found myself in the same *Nat Mandir* where I had been sitting. I felt as if a thrill was passing through my system and it appeared that my vision was slowly undergoing a change in my transition from the astral to the physical plane; and at last I opened my eyes. To my amazement I found the apparition of my wife sitting close to me and making sandal-wood paste for the god of the temple. I stared at her, but she only looked at me and smiled but did not speak. While looking at her I regained my full consciousness and found her no more."

Since then the doctor never saw his wife with his physical eyes. One day his youngest child was crying, none including the doctor took any notice of it. Suddenly he heard the voice of his wife calling upon him to attend on him. The doctor heard it so distinctly and clearly that he could not even doubt for a moment that his wife did not call him then. On another occasion he felt her presence in another way. He lay ill with fever and as usual felt uneasy. Then he felt that his wife was present, infact, she was fanning his head with a punkha. After what has been described about the materialization of his wife at

Benares before his sister she once again materialized herself. This time before the doctor's cook. His cook saw her quite distinctly at the time when he was attending on him during an attack of choleric diarrhoea.

Besides what has been described above he had seen his wife in dreams and visions every now and then. He felt her presence quite often in various ways. He had learnt many things from her. It is through her that he was now thoroughly convinced of the immortality of the soul and the re-union of loving hearts. He had no fear of death now.

Three Years with Ghosts

Babu Anutosh Das Gupta, M.A., Professor of Botany, Bangabasi College, Calcutta, read the following paper, containing details of wonderful supernormal phenomena, at a meeting of the Calcutta Psychical Society, held on Saturday, the 20th August, 1932, in the hall of the Bengal Theosophical Society. All the events happened at his Calcutta residence during a period of three years. Professor Das Gupta is a learned scientist and was a total sceptic regarding the existence of spirits or after-life. But three years of personal and intimate experience have wrought a complete change in his outlook and now he is a firm believer in them. Among the eye-witnesses to the occurrences were Principal Jogendranath Mitra, Vice-President of the Theosophical Society, Prof. Tulshi Das Kar, Prof. Nani Gopal Mukherjee, Babu Lal Mohan Ghosh, Post Master of Bow Bazar Post Office, and many other educated and cultured gentlemen. There could not, therefore, be any doubt about the authenticity of the statements which Mr. Das Gupta narrated below :

"I had no desire to make a public statement of my personal experience of spirit manifestation, because it is so novel and wonderful that most people would find

it difficult to believe me, and moreover, the statement would involve the disclosure of many personal and family matters in which the public should have no interest. Some of the gentlemen who were associated with the occurrences would prefer to remain anonymous to avoid the trouble or unpleasantness of a fruitless controversy with sceptics and persons of a materialistic complex to whom no amount of evidence and testimony however cogent would carry conviction.

Ten years ago I did not sincerely believe in ghosts or spirits like many of you to-day. I say "sincerely", because I might not bear a crucial test; a fear might have been lurking in me without my being quite aware of it. I did not believe in a life after death. It was my belief that if there was a soul it perhaps perished with the body. By "immortality of soul" I would simply understand the preservation of ancestral characters in the chromosomes of our germ-cells and the transmission of the same through successive generations in the race. Stories of ghosts and apparitions were treated by me no better than Grimm's Fairy Tales, and would provoke my laughter if the story-teller vouched for their authenticity, and professed truthfulness. I was in this state of mind when a sudden rude shock awoke me from my ignorance, and opened up before me a new avenue of knowledge.

In the year 1922 I was living with my family in a house at Champatola near Amherst Street. In the early part of September many trifling incidents happened in my house of which I took no serious notice. My little daughters who played together complained that some one was tampering with their play-things, removing plaintain-shoots, and tulsi-plants almost every day. Sometime afterwards a new girl made their acquaintance. She was aged seven years, exceedingly handsome, as I heard from the girls, and was often seen at the doors. The girls said that she appeared and disappeared suddenly, talked and played with the girls, and brought them baskets of sweetmeat. This strange girl gave out that her grandmother was

very rich, and sent those presents to my second daughter aged about ten who bore striking resemblance to a daughter of the said lady who had died sometime ago.



AMIYA.

Died on 26-6-23 (11th Ashar, 1330)
at the age of 10.

My wife and I tried to see the girl ; but she would not appear before us ; inspite of our best endeavour we never succeeded in seeing her : we only thought she was very shy and would not like to see us. But

baskets of sweetmeat came so frequently that we did not know what to make of them ; and at last I wrote a letter to the alleged grandmother of that strange girl requesting her not to spend her money so lavishly in sending us too many presents on sentimental grounds. But she would not listen. My second daughter said she saw the alleged grandmother, and talked with her every now and then. Such was the profusion of sweetmeats and other eatables in my house that whoever came to my house was treated to a sumptuous feast, and I acquired a reputation among my friends and relations for hospitality in which many rich people do not ordinarily indulge. Things went on in this way, but soon we discovered that our money was missing. We began to lose money every day even from our strong boxes. I began to realise there was no place in the house where I could keep my money safely, even guarding such places all the time. My mother and elder sister came to Calcutta on the 20th September for bath in the Ganges and to stay with us for sometime. One day we went out for *Gangasnan* (a bath in the sacred waters of the Ganges). Before closing my windows and the door I kept my money without the knowledge of any body in the house within the folds of papers in a drawer of my secretariat table, and properly locked it up. I was all the time thinking that money was likely to be stolen during my short absence, and I was very careful that none else knew how and where I was keeping it. The money was in ten-rupee notes, and all bore the impression of my rubber-stamp. On my return home with the whole family, I found my drawer open, and some of the notes missing, but not all. The thief was very considerate in not robbing me of all my money, though quite a large sum was stolen. I was quite non-plussed by his wonderful tricks. I found that money would disappear from the knotted corners of *Saris*, and the folds of my loin-cloth. I felt I became the victim of a great rogue possessing wonderful powers as are attributed to Black Art or magic. Yet I had to be

thankful that the thief did not take all my money on each occasion. Would an outsider do like that? How could it be done by any of us? We were in a fix what to do, and felt quite helpless. On the 8th October I informed the police. An enquiry was held, but without any effect. On the 11th October while rising from my mid-day sleep I found one of my new cloths hung in the verandah very badly torn. I drew the attention of the ladies, and enquired if they knew any thing about it. They were all surprised and vexed by the mischief done. Forthwith I hung up another piece of new cloth just near the ceiling so that no other person of my family could reach it easily; and addressing the unknown and unseen miscreant a little loudly so that I could be heard from the nearest premises, I challenged him to show his audacity by tearing this cloth also, and waited for sometime to see the result. But nothing happened as long as I was at home. On my return from evening walk at about 9 P.M. the whole family told me excitedly that not only the second piece of cloth was torn as the first, but every other piece of cloth in the house including some shirts and coats on the rack was also torn. With fear and anxiety I opened some of the steel trunks by means of keys to see the condition of other clothing, and to our great astonishment some shirts and coats were found badly torn with bundles inside the trunks as if in reply to my challenge, and the nature of the damage unmistakably showed that it was quite of recent occurrence. I satisfied myself that the room was not vacant for a moment during my absence, some of the family staying inside all the time. How it became possible to commit the mischief without being detected by any body was beyond my power of understanding. Owing to such commotion in the house cooking was not yet done, and I ordered *Khichuri* to be prepared. After eating *Khichuri* I went down-stairs into my parlour; and after two minutes I was called by the ladies to see that the plate in which I had eaten *Khichuri* was placed on my bed. It was a nasty sight,

and the plate was removed by my sister. When we were discussing the matter the plate was again seen on my pillow. How it went there nobody saw. It was removed again, all wondering at the strange phenomenon. Then I saw a doll standing in the middle of my bed. The doll came from an almirah or glass-case though the actual process of coming was not noticed by any of us. I shut the door of the glass-case with lock and key and at once I noticed two other dolls on my bed; then another, and in this way several dolls stood on my bed, and at the same time they disappeared from the glass-case the doors of which were found shut as before. But at no time we saw the dolls actually passing through the air; and the transference was perfectly noiseless. I do not think I or anybody else could remove so many dolls so many times in the room so noiselessly without being at all detected by the careful eyes that were witnessing the phenomena. In one corner of the room there was an image of Laxmi near which were conches, cowries (shells), flowers and other things. The shells and flower also began to appear on my bed, though none of us saw them actually passing through the air. Then I removed my mother, sister, wife and children from the room, shut the door, being sure that there was nobody left in the room, and all waited outside in order to see if anything could happen in the room during the absence of all of us. After three or four minutes I entered the room first, others following behind me, and saw many queer and curious things. Two small images of Radha and Krishna that were kept separately within the glass-case were found standing in pair each in its appropriate position on the floor near the said corner; and a number of shells, flowers and toys were found neatly arranged in various geometrical figures near the images of Laxmi and Radha-Krishna. And all these toys were found missing from the glass-case. To make an end of such scenes, I ordered all to go to sleep, and nothing more happened in the night.

Next day I went to Muchipara Thana again. I spoke to Police Inspector Hamid. He heard all particulars with patience and attention and sent two Police-officers for enquiry; but he told me privately that he would not be able to help me in my difficulty and advised me to call a Brahmin priest and offer worship to our gods and goddesses which alone could give us relief. I did not at first understand what he meant. I was sorry to think that he was joking and had taken me lightly. He was known to be a man of great experience, courage and intelligence and I believed he would be able to catch hold of the mischief-maker if he took up my case personally and I insisted on his holding a personal inquiry into the matter. But he, with great politeness, advised me to offer prayer and worship, without which, he said, there was no earthly chance of relief. Two Police-officers accompanied me to my place, investigated the matter and went away in astonishment, for they thought, it was beyond their power to help me.

Next day, very strange things began to happen in broad day-light. Time will not permit me to enter into all details. But I will tell you just a few things. In the kitchen on the ground floor, my wife thought that she wanted a cup; at once a cup came from upstairs and rested before her. While taking her food she liked to have some tamarind; at once a lump of tamarind came upon her plate from upstairs. While in my parlour I wanted a matchbox and at once a matchbox was thrown near me. Who threw it I did not see. My mother called me near her while she was taking her food and complained that her cup was being repeatedly placed upon her plate by an unseen hand, though every time she removed it from her plate. I stood there and exclaimed, "Don't disturb my mother. Let her take food in peace,"—and further disturbance ceased.

Next day, the violence increased considerably. When my mother was sitting near her oven (*unan*) preparing to cook her own food the oven which was not

yet lighted disappeared mysteriously. How it happened she could not notice. We made diligent search for it in the whole house but nowhere it could be found. Other attempts were made to cook her meal, but all were frustrated so that she was compelled to fast the whole day. It was subsequently known to us to be a very memorable day; for, it was on this very day when my mother was compelled to fast in Calcutta, that her youngest daughter died at Noakhali. In the afternoon of the same day, when we were sitting in the upper room to discuss our strange experiences, the missing oven suddenly appeared before us softly and quite unbroken; and we were astonished beyond measure to find it appear before us under such strange circumstances.

Things gradually grew worse and more alarming. Plates, utensils and tea-sets were dashed to the floor and broken to pieces in broad day-light. Under my orders all members of the family quitted the upper room which became the scene of such disturbances and I carefully shut all its windows and doors and locked it up from outside. Yet things began to come out from the interior of the room and were dashed to the ground before us on the ground floor. The landlady, who watched these strange things standing on her roof in the adjoining house, told us in great excitement to vacate her house as quickly as possible, as otherwise, it might be soon described as a haunted house and no tenants would like to hire it.

One day at about 1 P.M., while I was preparing to rest in bed, I discovered a laddoo (sweetmeat) of the size of common *Rasogolla* lying on my bed. It was made of *suji*, sugar, cocoanut and some other things fried in ghee and just hot from the frying pan, and little bubbles of ghee were still upon it. I examined it carefully and had never seen similar things prepared and sold in sweetmeat shops in Calcutta. Then came another, a third, a fourth, a fifth, at brief intervals, all hot from the frying pan. All members of my

family who were in the same room watched this occurrence. I tasted one laddoo in spite of the warning of others. It was hot and quite tasty. I looked out of the window, and saw a friend, Babu Nogendra Mukherji, (now dead) standing on a veranda below. I gave him a laddoo and asked him to go and see if such laddoos were being prepared in any of the sweetmeat shops in the neighbourhood. He returned to say that such laddoos could not be found anywhere and were never prepared by confectioners in Calcutta. He gave its name as "*Anando-naroo*." It was subsequently learnt that, on this very day and at the same time when we were receiving these laddoos in Calcutta, my elder brother's wife was preparing such laddoos at Jaidebpur nearly 300 miles from Calcutta. While my sister-in-law was placing the laddoos from a frying-pan on a plate in the care of her daughter who was assisting her, the laddoos were missing from the plate. "Why are you eating up the laddoos?" asked the mother. The daughter swore and replied that she had not eaten a single laddoo and could not say how they were missing. I cannot say if these two occurrences which happened at two different places nearly 300 miles apart could have any relation to each other; but it was a very strange coincidence. If it is assumed that the same laddoos which disappeared from Jaidebpur were simultaneously received in Calcutta, the tremendous rapidity with which they must have travelled through the air should have caused them to take fire before reaching Calcutta. Such an assumption cannot be supported by physical laws. And how could they pass through other obstacles? When we cannot explain it by physical science it is very easy to say that it was all illusion, hallucination or mental aberration.

My friends and neighbours advised me to call an *Ojha* or exorcist in order to stop these disturbances; but I wanted to study these strange phenomena on a rational line in order to come to a definite conclusion rather than see them stopped by the intervention of an *Ojha*. If it were done by any ghost or spirit, and

I could know that with certainty, then there would be a valuable addition to my knowledge for which I was prepared to suffer any loss.. But at last an *Ojha* was brought by a friend, Babu Sarat Chandra Pal; and when I actually saw him I did not interfere with his work. When the *Ojha* left the house after his performance he took away a piece of bamboo and assured us that he was carrying away the spirit imprisoned in the bamboo pole.

But troubles began to increase in my house from day to day; and I did not report anything to the Press; for that would attract hoards of visitors to my house and perhaps put me to ridicule and criticism. I was not aware of any Psychical Society or kindred Association in Calcutta. One day, in great despair and perplexity of mind, I went to the Bengal Theosophical Society and wanted to see the Secretary. I was directed to the residence of Prof. Tulsidas Kar, M.A. of the Calcutta Medical College. Prof. Kar granted me an interview and seemed to be a gentleman of exceedingly obliging manners. He gave me a patient hearing, asking me a lot of questions which I readily answered. He then told me to see him again after three days; for, he wanted to consult Principal Jogendranath Mitra, M.A., B.L., the Vice-President of the Bengal Theosophical Society.

These three days seemed awfully long; for troubles had enormously increased in my house. One day for fear of breakage and damage I put my utensils in a gunny bag, and tied up the open end with a strong cord, and placed it in charge of a strong youngman in another room. But cups and dishes began to come out of the gunny bag without making any hole in it and with the end of it strongly tied up, and were dashed to the floor as if by a mad person in a fit of violent anger.

One day, when we were sitting in the upper room about midday, Homœopathic phials, that were kept shut up in a box in my parlour in the ground floor,

and the door of the room secured by a padlock, began to come into the upper room and were dashed to the floor near me. They could not be thrown from the lower to the upper room in a straight line; and moreover there was nobody in the room. I recognised these phials to be my own by their original packing and labels. Seeing this violence in broad day-light, I thought about my lamp and chimney in the lower room which also might be broken in the same manner; and no sooner had the thought come across my mind than the chimney actually came from the lower room and was dashed to the floor before us all in the upper room and broken to pieces. The ladies did not show any nervousness as they had grown pretty accustomed to such occurrences. I called a friend of mine, Professor Nani Gopal Mukherjee, M.A. of the Bangabasi College, a gentleman of religious disposition and well-known for his "*Kirtan*," to see if he could help me with his advice and intervention. I brought two other gentlemen, Mr. Lalmohan Ghose, M.A., an officer of position in the Calcutta G. P. O., formerly Post Master of Howrah, and another gentleman, Babu Bejoy Krishna Bhattacharjya and two ex-students of the Bangabasi College who had taken new *Diksha* (initiation) from their *Guru*; and all these gentlemen watched and guarded my room, occasionally singing *Kirtan*. One night, when books were being thrown out from inside my almirah in the presence of the above-named gentlemen, I hung up a curtain putting the girls and ladies inside. Books began to be thrown inside the curtain from outside without tearing or raising the curtain. I had hung up the curtain to show these gentlemen, one of the various proofs that matter could pass through matter without tearing it. A cup, a dish or a small piece of furniture passed through the wall or door of a room, all doors and windows of which were completely shut to the satisfaction of all, without making a hole anywhere. I asked my friend, Prof. Nani Gopal Mukherjee, to invite Sir J. C. Bose to come and explain these phenomena from the pages of physical science.

Prof. Mukherjee who was a student of Shakespeare and member of the Theosophical Society said, "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy."

Babu Lalmohon Ghosh, M.A. and Prof. Nani Gopal Mukherji one day came in the evening with two students and Babu Bejoy Bhattacharjya to sing *Kirtans*. After a few songs, when there was a pause there was again stir in the house. Lalmohon Babu proposed that "*Chandi*" should be read in my room, but where to get a copy of "*Chandi*"? Nani Babu said he had got one copy in his house and offered to bring it. When he left my room he found that one of his shoes was missing. There was nobody outside, the whole family and ourselves were inside the room. This provoked some laughter and all visitors went out to see if their own shoes were all right. But it was discovered that one shoe from each pair was missing. Nani Babu exclaimed that he would go barefooted to fetch his "*Chandi*." Within half an hour he returned to say that the copy of "*Chandi*" was missing from its usual place and could not be found anywhere in the house. There was laughter again and Lalmohon Babu observed that it had really occurred to his mind that the "*Chandi*" would not be found just as one shoe was missing from each pair. After singing many songs the party retired late at night and this time they all found their missing shoes lying in the same place where they had been left.

Prof. Nani Gopal Mukherji related this story to his father-in-law and other members of his family. His father-in-law, the late Dr. Hemnath Adhikari, B.A., M.B., retired Chemical Examiner to the Government of Bengal, was then living in his house at Champatala. One day he paid a visit to my house about 8 o'clock in the morning. He and I sat in the upper room expecting to see some such phenomenon while others had left the room. Pulses began to fall from the ceiling in his presence and he was astonished to see the shower of pulses and in spite of vigilant

watch could not account for this strange phenomenon. He said that it was undoubtedly the work of a spirit and told me a story of his personal experience of spirit phenomenon in the Campbell Hospital where he was a House Physician in the early years of his medical practice. He left me greatly impressed by this occurrence and took a keen interest in the later developments of such mysterious occurrences.

On receipt of a letter from Prof. Tulsidas Kar I went to see him again and was taken to Principal Jogendranath Mitra who was then residing in a house at Cornwallis Street. Principal Mitra patiently heard me for nearly three hours and told me he believed my story and that similar occurrences were on record. He told me that some discarnate being,—by this phrase I understood the soul of a dead person,—wanted to establish communication with me and all this violence was the manifestation of a great attempt to open communication with me. He asked me not to betray the slightest form of anger or hatred but to radiate love and energy to the spirit, to assure him that I was quite willing to help him if he required my help, and to show all love and kindness to the spirit. He gave me an hour of advice and I promised to follow his instruction: Nani Babu stayed and was awake with me long hours in the night with a huge work of Madame Blavatsky open before him and turned over its pages to find some hints for guidance towards getting relief from the disturbances. Sometimes he put out the candle and prayed in silence to get a message from the spirit. Following his suggestion, one day I tied up a chalk pencil to the blackboard in my upper room and entreated the invisible spirit kindly to give out his name. In the afternoon of the same day I placed a small button on my table and said: "If you are the soul of a male person please throw this button to the right corner; if you are the soul of a woman throw this button to the left corner." In a few minutes the button went off to the left corner of the room indicating that it was the spirit of a female. I tried a similar

experiment with a match-box with the same result. Then I asked: "If you are a deceased relative then throw this casket to the south-west corner (pointing my hand to the south-west), but if you are not a relative, nor any one of my own caste, throw it in any other direction. The casket flew to the south-west indicating that it was the spirit of a relative. These experiments were made by all members of the family and the object to be thrown was placed on a table from which all were standing aloof. These successes brought hope in my mind and we anxiously awaited some sort of revelation. We prayed every morning, offered sweets to the unknown spirit in the same manner as sweets are offered to a house-hold deity with this difference that while the latter does not seem to take offerings, nor offerings were actually taken on each occasion, but we were perfectly satisfied that the sweetmeat was really taken by the spirit and by no other persons or animals such as cats and mice. Sometimes the sweetmeat was taken away in the twinkling of an eye while we were carefully watching the same. The idea of offering sweetmeat to the spirit was suggested by Mokshada, our maid-servant, who said that she had seen similar things in another house. In spite of all these violences we had no fear of ghosts in our mind and the children were not at all frightened. They maintained their usual calmness of mind and seemed to think that these happenings were natural phenomena of the world, like rain, storms and thunder. But my own mind was greatly perturbed. It was suggested by a friend that any person might be doing this thing unconsciously as a tool in the hands of the spirit. Accordingly, I drew a large circle with chalk on the floor and all members of the family were made to sit within the circle, and not to go out of it to ascertain if any member of the family might be doing this. And yet things would go on as usual. Every morning when I woke up my first business was to look at the blackboard if any writing appeared on it. One morning I found it clearly written on the

blackboard with a chalk "I am Parul." It was the name of a small girl, my niece, aged about seven, who had died at Noakhali on the 24th August, 1922, just a few weeks before these occurrences. Babu Bejoy Bhattacharjya who was a *Kirtan* singer came to see me in the same morning and asked me privately if I had any girl relative of the name of Parul. On my demanding the reason he said that a little girl had appeared to him in his dream in the previous night and said, "You all wish to know who I am? Then listen, I am Parul;" and then the figure disappeared. I told him all about the mysterious writing on the blackboard. I informed Prof. Nanigopal Mukherjea how his method had proved successful, for, it was at his suggestion that I tied up a chalk pencil to the blackboard.

When my old mother came to know that it was the spirit of Parul she began to weep and a few minutes after a small letter dropped from the ceiling. We read the letter which said, "Don't weep for me. I am happy in this world." I then looked at the ceiling and asked: "If you are Parul, why did you commit all this violence? Why did you not reveal yourself at once? How did you know your way to Calcutta and this house?" Just in a short time another letter dropped from the ceiling which said, "I wanted to create a deep impression upon your minds lest you should forget my appearance after death. In future no suspicion will occur to your mind about my appearing after death when you recall these exciting scenes. I had no difficulty to come over to Calcutta and find your place."

Q.—But you did not learn much writing while you were living. How can you write so well now?

A.—I have learnt writing in this new world.

Q.—Many of my friends and relatives who were highly educated are now in heaven. Why do they not write or appear before us?

A.—Because they can't. All people here can

not write or communicate. I am enjoying a special privilege.

My mother asked hundreds of questions and almost immediately got replies in writing. The



LILA.

Died on 31-5-23 (17 Jaista, 1330)
at the age of 4 or 5.

writing was in pencil, coloured pencil. When one pencil was exhausted it dropped from the ceiling and another was supplied. In the evening I went to the

market and bought a small rubber doll to make a present to the spirit. The doll whistled when pressed on the back. I put the doll in a corner of the room where goddess Laxmi was worshipped and asked her to take the doll. The doll disappeared and soon fell from the ceiling. I took up the doll again and requested her to take it as a present from me. The doll went up this time and whistled all the way to the ceiling though we did not see any fingers pressing on it. It whistled several times while rising up and up in the air and disappeared in the ceiling. In a few minutes the doll again fell from the ceiling accompanied by a letter which said, "What shall I do with this doll? Give it to Lila who can play with it." Lila was the name of my youngest daughter.

Soon after the revelation the spirit wanted *Pinda*. She wrote on the black board in Bengali, "Give me *Pinda*." A relative of mine, the late Babu Kunja Mohan Das Gupta, was then Jailor at Gaya. I sent a remittance of Rs. 10/- only to him asking him to call a *Panda* and offer "*Pinda*" to this girl, giving particulars and the date of her death. An acknowledgment was received but a few days later the money was refunded to me on the ground that *Pinda* could not be offered before the expiry of one year from the date of death. I was sad at heart to think that the deliverance of the spirit would be delayed for so long a time as one year.

One day some writing appeared on the black-board and on the walls of the house to the effect, "Great misfortune is awaiting you. Go home soon." This time we were alarmed.

I asked the spirit some such questions : "Was this house likely to collapse? Should we vacate this house and take another? Would some of us die soon? Would some misfortune befall others who are staying at home? Should we leave Calcutta immediately? Or can we stay sometime more without harm?"

The reply came: "There is no hurry. You need not leave this house. Don't fear a misfortune." Our anxiety was somewhat allayed by this message. It was all in writing and letters dropping from the ceiling.

The Puja vacation was almost spent. On the evening of the Dipali night a little pretty girl, known to two of my daughters, but never seen by me, presented some fireworks and red and green match-boxes to my daughters. A few days later, Parul's father who had come to our place told us incidentally that when he was walking along Amherst Street in the afternoon of the Dipali festival, a girl bearing striking resemblance to Parul and dressed in a nice *sari* came to him and said, "Father, will you give me some money to buy some fireworks?" Struck by her appearance, looking like his own daughter, he at once gave her some money and the girl walked away quickly. The same evening my daughters received the fireworks from a pretty girl. At the special request of the spirit I did not say anything about her to her father who had been with us for some time nor did I write any letter to her home.

I asked the spirit if she could assume a material form. She at once replied in writing that she visited our house every day and played with the girls in the form of a girl. It was in vain that I tried to see her but two of my daughters saw her everyday as she came to play with them and brought them sweetmeats and nice presents. She was described as a very beautiful girl dressed in nice *saris* and costly jewellery. Her body was very soft and sometimes seemed to possess no substance as a hand could be passed through it from one side to another. Sometimes she had a duplicate form in her appearance just as a pencil shows a double image on a glass. Her appearance was very variable although she could be recognised as the same girl all the time. To amuse my daughters she would stand in the middle of a road and allow

motor cars to run over her and yet she would not be hurt.

In accordance with her directions I took the family with me to Jaidevpur in the district of Dacca. In the railway compartment Parul was distinctly visible to the girls as a semi-transparent body sitting among the ladies and often communicating messages. While at home just for a few days I elicited a good deal of information about the other world in which she was living and about our dead friends and relatives by constantly asking questions. My second daughter declared that she could distinctly hear Parul speak to her in her ear. Out of curiosity I applied my ear to the ear of my daughter but heard nothing. I tried many times to hear the voice of the spirit but failed. Subsequently, I could use my second daughter as a medium to get replies through her mouth from Parul. Formerly I had no knowledge of mediumship. I only found it out by trial and experiment.

On account of exposure to cold or other reasons I was attacked with sudden loss of voice which kept me away from college classes for a number of days. I asked the spirit if there was any remedy known to her that might cure me speedily and she wrote me to say that I should go to Dacca and make offerings to goddess "*Dhakeswari*" who would be pleased to grant me relief from this impediment. My throat had been examined in the Calcutta Medical College and all spray and paints prescribed by them were persistently tried but without the least sign of improvement. At last I went to Dacca, made offerings to goddess *Dhakeswari* and there was great improvement on the first day. My relief was not sudden but progressive and I was cured in three days. Persons who think that all good comes from God will attribute my recovery to Divine mercy but sceptics would assert that a change to Dacca might have given a sufficient stimulus to nature's healing process. I would rather think that spirits possessed a better knowledge of gods

or retained their creed even after transference to another place of existence.

How the spirit encouraged us in the observance of religious rites and gave an ample proof of her religious disposition will be apparent from numerous incidents :

One day she said : "A beggar is coming to-morrow morning and will ask for a piece of cloth." Next morning to our great astonishment a beggar did come early in the morning and asked for a piece of cloth. A cloth was at last given to him by the ladies. She would now and then ask the ladies to visit the temple of Madhab, and give offerings of "*Hariloot*" inviting all people of the neighbourhood.

One day she said to my brother's wife, "*Burra mami*", you must go to Dacca to-day to worship and give offerings to goddess '*Sitala*' at Buxi Bazar which you promised to do some years ago but you failed to keep your promise. You have to redeem your promise at once." "Why", replied my sister-in-law, "I have already kept my promise. I handed a rupee to a relative to give offerings to goddess *Sitala* and I know it was done by him. So why should I go now?"

"Oh, such offerings through a representative were not acceptable to goddess *Sitala*. You have to do it personally. You should go to Dacca to-day to do the worship, and must stay there three days."

"I can't stay there three days even if I go to-day. Puja will be finished by tomorrow morning and I can return by the evening train. I am too busy about my household affairs to be spared for three days."

"Oh, you have to stay there three days. You will perceive that."

Accordingly they went to Dacca the same day intending to return by next evening. But they were detained at Dacca for three days owing to some unforeseen circumstances. From similar incidents, I have often thought that spirits have a wider range of

vision extending through past, present and future which is not ordinarily given to mortals.

Parul's mother died at Noakhali while we were in Calcutta, experiencing spirit manifestations. But the news of this death was concealed from my mother. While she heard the sad news at Jaidebpur, my mother began to cry. The spirit sent a letter asking her to stop crying as her deceased daughter was standing near her. "How can I believe that my daughter is standing here? Show me some proof. Let my daughter write a letter to me." The spirit said that her mother was unable to write a letter at that stage but would soon develop the power to write and so saying she threw a burnt iron bangle and this, she added, was brought by her from the cremation ground at Noakhali where her mother's remains had been burnt to ashes. At the sight of this bangle my mother was greatly pacified. I wanted to exhibit this bangle at this meeting but now I come to know that it is with my eldest sister who is not in Calcutta.

Regarding the identity of the spirit it may be said she gave us very accurate details of the joint-family life of her own parents and uncles and aunts and the children among whom she had spent her short life on earth and none but a member of that family could possess such knowledge.

One day, I asked if the other spirits of heaven possess the power to come down to earth and eat sweetmeats given by me just as she did. She said they could. Then I intimated my desire of feeding some of my nearest relatives who had died long ago. She asked me to select seven persons only (i.e., seven spirits only) for the proposed feast and she would bring them to earth to receive my offerings. Accordingly I asked my brother's wife to prepare *luchi*, cauliflower curry, fried brinjal and the best kind of *Sandesh* for the feast. Seven dishes were arranged and served on plantain leaves and they were covered with seven baskets. I then covered all these baskets with a khaddar cloth and

kept on watching with great anxiety and without leaving the place for a moment. I asked if the spirits had come to attend the invitation. My little daughter who was playing with other girls suddenly came to announce that the spirits had all come to the house to partake of the feast. I kept on watching to see with my own eyes what was going to happen. It was announced shortly afterwards that the spirits had finished their meals and left some *Prosad* for us. When the dishes were uncovered it was found that the cauli-flower curry had disappeared from each plantain leaf and only one or two *luchis* and some *sandesh* remained in each leaf. The scene was simply amazing and our feeling at that time can be better realised than described by me. I soon returned to Calcutta and invited Babu Bejoy Bhattacharjya to sleep with me in the night. I was living alone for six months and Parul wrote that I would be frightened to see any manifestation as I was living alone in the house.

I fetched my family to Calcutta after the next summer vacation. Some domestic calamities happened during summer. My youngest daughter, Lila, died on the 31st May 1923 at the age of 4 or 5 after suffering from typhoid fever for 18 days. Then my eldest daughter, Annapurna, died on the 20th June of the same year at the age of 13; and my second daughter, Amiya, aged 10 years, died after 6 days, that is, on the 25th June. So within a month my three daughters who had been playmates of the spirit-girl, died one after another. I realised how the prediction of the spirit came true. In due course, I went to Gaya in accordance with the wishes of the spirit. Since then, she made herself more and more scarce but yet came to me whenever I called her. I sometimes made her do some work for me. One day I asked her to bring some ice and threw down some pice. The pice disappeared and forthwith came a big lump of ice. This happened on the roof of 79/1, Akhil Mistri Lane where I had removed with my family.

Gentlemen, I have given you only a small fraction of the whole of my experience covering three years and it is impossible for me to say everything within the short time at my disposal. One of the Secretaries



ANNAPURNA.

Died on 20-6-23 (5th Ashar, 1330)
at the age of 16.

of the Calcutta Psychical Society Mr. Saroj Kumar Chowdhury, without hearing the whole of my narrative, has requested me to satisfy the audience that my case was not one of thought-transference, clairvoyance or

mental aberration. Gentlemen, I have had little or no acquaintance with psychical literature and in writing this narrative I have not been in any way influenced by the teachings of psychical society. I do not exactly understand the meanings of thought-transference or clairvoyance, but so far as the terms seem to imply, I do not think they can operate in producing the phenomena described by me. A magician would find a better place to display his wonderful tricks in the Court of a Prince or Maharaja rather than in a poor man's cottage. If a magician had torn my clothes and broken my utensils or pretended to have done so, he could perhaps restore them to their former condition. He would never remain an invisible guest in my house for nearly three years, scribbling on waste papers, indulging in pranks, feeding the dead and asking me to offer him "*Pinda*" at Gaya. A magician would make a better use of his time and talents in a public stage or in the houses of rich people seeking wealth, popularity and patronage. If, in the light of Experimental Psychology, the phenomena could be explained in a more rational way without attributing them to any super-normal power,—I am quite amenable to reason even at this stage,—and if any person goes so far as to attribute these experiences to some sort of mental aberration or derangement from which I and those others who have observed this phenomenon may have been suffering and would ask me to submit to a scientific test, I beg to submit that no useful purpose would be served if I fall short of their standard. By believing in a life after death which I scarcely believed ten years ago, I am now on the same side with men like Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Crooks, Mr. William Stead, Mr. F. W. Meyers, Sir A. Conan Doyle, Mr. Leadbeater, Dr. Annie Besant, Sj. Hirendra Nath Dutt, though I am unworthy to untie the latches of their shoes. Let their brains be tested first rather than mine in the light of modern science; if you find them deranged or unsound, then raise your fist to give a death blow,

if you can, to the psychical knowledge that has accumulated in this world of ours since the beginning of creation. Yet I would not call them sane people who easily believe in spirits without persistent and careful investigations. I have placed these facts before you in good faith to draw your own conclusions. Whether or not you should believe my statement is not my look-out. Personally, I am now a believer in life after death, my experiences having wrought these changes in me. I believe in the offering of oblations of water to the departed souls and I have heard from the other side that there is a stir in the spirit-world when we do so in loving memory of the dead. I thank you heartily and respectfully for very kindly and patiently listening to my narrative."

The statements from Professor Nani Gopal Mukherjee, M.A., Babu Lal Mohan Ghose, M.A. and Babu Sarat Chandra Pal testifying to the occurrence of the supernormal phenomena described by Professor Das Gupta in his narrative, are published below :

I

At a general meeting of the Calcutta Psychical Society held some time back, Prof. A. Das Gupta, M.A., of the Bangabasi College, made certain disclosures of his experience with a spirit that subsequently turned out to be the spirit of a juvenile relative of his own. It was not the sudden encounter of an apparition which we may be tempted to explain away by reference to some subjective aberrations of the moment. The spirit became, for a good length of time, a regular daily and nightly visitor to the Professor's house, or I think, I express myself better, if I say, that it became an indweller of his house for months together. The multifarious activity of the spirit during the period was reported to me regularly, more because I happened to be my friend's neighbour than for anything else, and because my friend could hardly get anybody else to keep in his house during those stormy days. Most of the incidents referred to by Prof. Das Gupta happened either while I was in my own house or waiting downstairs in his dispensary room. Many of the occurrences were shown me immediately after

they took place, and on certain exceptionally busy days, I had to run up-and-downstairs while waiting leisurely in his dispensary room in order to see the doings of the spirit with my own eyes. Unfortunately for me, I could not for many days have any direct ocular experience of the spirit's doing, though I longed so much to have some. The mischievous operations of the spirit increased generally during the first half of the night and in daytime. But strange as it may seem, when I was present in my friend's bedroom for hours together, sometimes up to 1 or 2 A.M., nothing happened that could be attributed to the spirit. For surer conviction I would insist upon my friend's family members being kept under my eye in the same room in a corner. On several such occasions of night watch Babu Lal Mohan Ghose M.A., a common friend of ours, would bear me company ; and we would then pray, either silently or aloud, for this evil to be averted from our friend's house. Sometimes I would read certain chapters from Madam Blavatsky's Secret Doctrine, for getting any fresh light, if possible. The theft of my shoes, and a futile search for them on the occasion that I had made up my mind to read from my copy of *Chandi*, and the subsequent restoration of those shoes in that very spot from where they had been missing, have all been referred to in Professor Das Gupta's account of his experience, and this was one of the first incidents that impressed me with what was something like a conviction. It was I who suggested to Prof. Das Gupta to put on his table pencils and slips of paper as well as some bits of chalk on the black-board he used for his children, and these arrangements proved very fruitful since then for establishing the identity of the spirit, the revealing of its purpose, and finally, for suggesting means for getting rid of it. The quickness with which slips of paper scribbled with sense and nonsense came down on the floor from the writing-table was simply surprising. The hand that wrote those things appeared to any observer to be juvenile, and the discovery of this fact speedily led on to the discovery of the right and exact earthly connections of the spirit. While living and moving for so many days among supernatural occurrences I was sorry that the spirit made no direct manifestation of itself to me. Even four, five or six hours, waiting on tiptoe of expectation of some visible sign, was useless. At length, one afternoon, about 4 p.m., I sat by the table in the room upstairs. All the members of the family were downstairs all the time. I was alone, facing the north, in front of the table. Then I changed my position, and faced south, without leaving my seat. The northern wall of the room was at a distance of only three or four feet from me, the southern wall was at least fifteen feet away. On the west all the windows except one directly to my right were shut, and

on the east only the entrance door to my left was kept open. I was seriously thinking of having some direct sense-experience of the presence of the spirit. I was praying, all the time, not only to God, but entreating the spirit also, to satisfy my desire. Strange to say, I had hardly waited for a few seconds when some globules of cassava fell on the ground from the ceiling. I had some practical knowledge about movements of things thrown transversely and those of things dropping down vertically. I examined the ceiling to see if it might be the doing of some rat. But no, I could stand on no hypothesis of that kind with any reason. As I was grumbling within for this rather unconvincing manifestation, there fell pat on the ground a bit of some broken earthenware with very old tamarind sticking to one side of it. I carefully observed that there was not the least lateral motion of that piece as it fell. I was convinced that it had dropped down from the ceiling and that no rat or any other living creature could be made responsible for that phenomenon. It is needless to add that all the time I watched right and left and looked through the window and the door to assure myself that nothing might be done by some mischievous person, either of the house or of the neighbourhood. In short, I was thoroughly convinced of some invisible agent being responsible for all this. Acute logicians may find many loop-holes in my arguments and my observation, but I may only repeat what some famous psychical student says, namely, that in such matters even the evidence of our senses we are likely to ignore, and are tempted to attribute any such experience to some abnormal state of mind or to some unknown natural causes that sometimes may make fools of us.

NANI GOPAL MUKHERJEE,
Prof. Bangabasi College.

18, Scotts Lane, Calcutta.
10th November, 1932.

II

Babu Lal Mohan Ghose, M.A., Post Master, Bow Bazar, Calcutta, was interviewed at his place on Saturday, the 19th November, 1932, at 7-45 P.M. by Babus Saroj Kumar Chowdhury, Dabendra Chandra Sen and Anutosh Das-Gupta. Lal Mohan Babu said that he had read a summary of Prof. Das-Gupta's discourse on spirit manifestation as published in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, dated September 11, 1932 (Town Edition), and that he was placed in a very difficult position as he was constantly questioned by a large number of friends on the subject of spirits, and his knowledge of them. He fully corroborated the statements of Prof. Das-Gupta, and recalled

many incidents including the missing of one of his shoes in connection with his proposal of reading *Chandi* when Prof. Nani Gopal Mukherjee wanted to fetch it ; his singing of the song of *Tarak Brahma* in the haunted house on a certain night which according to his expectation was followed by the revelation of the spirit of Parul by writing on a black-board ; and of the subsequent warning of coming calamities given by the spirit, and asking the family to go home soon. He observed that no useful purpose would be served by discussing these matters with the public at large, as the mysteries of life would be unravelled to each individual when his proper time came ; and that until then such personal evidences however cogent would fail to carry conviction, and make little impression upon persons of a materialistic complex. "Spiritualism and religion," he continued, "are intimately connected together, and the little we know need not be trumpeted." He further reminded Professor Das Gupta how the spirit had, in some of her communications, requested not to disclose the secrecy of such occurrences.

III

Professor A. Das Gupta and I lived in opposite houses at Champatola for some years. In September 1922 my attention was drawn to very unusual occurrences in his house preceded by the missing of money and jewellery. I tried to trace the missing articles, but failed. I saw many times with my own eyes the breaking of bottles and utensils in the house in my presence and sometimes they fell so near me that I ran away in fear lest I should get hurt. But all persons miraculously escaped injury. I saw with my own eyes the throwing of matches in the parlour in the presence of Prof. Das Gupta and we wondered how this could happen ; for, we never succeeded in detecting any person doing this. We thought we could be deceived once, twice, or thrice, but not always and kept a sharp look-out. Things became worse day by day, frustrating all attempts at detection, and we became hopeless. We both went to Muchipara Thana and informed the Police. The Police came to inquire several times but could not help. Finally, they advised us to do worship, indicating that it was not done by any mortals. Nani Gopal Babu and Lal Mohan Babu used to come now and then to help us. I wanted to bring an *Ojha* (exorcist), but Nani Babu and Lal Mohan Babu were opposed to it. They thought they could bring relief by means of their religious songs and prayers. From the nature of the occurrences we had no doubt that it was done by some spirit, though none of us had seen any spirit before. I saw with my own eyes how sweetmeat was offered

APPENDIX

TRANSMISSION OF A LETTER FROM LONDON TO CALCUTTA WITHIN A FEW MINUTES

I

The following letter under the caption "Facts more strange than Fiction" was written by Mr. J. G. Meugens and appeared in the *Psychic Notes* in its issue of January 27, 1882 :

Perhaps the following account of some very remarkable occurrences that have recently taken place through the mediumship of Mr. W. Eglinton, may be of interest to the readers. It may, perhaps, be as well, before proceeding with my narrative, for me to state that I have been a spiritualist for some years, that I have been favoured, when in England, with many very startling manifestations through various mediums, and that my friend, to whom reference is made in the following account, is not only a pronounced spiritualist but also a very powerful medium. My reason for stating this fact clearly at the commencement is that many people will ask why, if these things are possible with any one, they cannot be done by all people and at all times and places? Spiritualists will understand what is possible when the spirits have a powerful medium or battery at each end and the sitter, as in my case, is in sympathy or *en rapport* with both.

With this preface, I will proceed to give an account of the matter. On the first Sunday after Mr. Eglinton's arrival at Calcutta, the date being 20th November, 1881, we went over to dine at Howrah with our friends, Colonel and Mrs. Gordon. Returning to my residence about half past ten o'clock, Mr. Eglinton asked me to come and sit with him for a time in the verandah before going to sleep, as he felt impressed that some manifestations would take place. After sitting for a few minutes Mr. Eglinton was entranced, and when in that state, one of his spirit-guides, giving the name of "Daisy," spoke to me through his lips. The purport of her remarks was to the effect that the spirits wished to give me a manifestation of their power, and that they would bring me something from a friend of mine then in London, asking me what I would wish to receive. I replied anything that I could recognise as coming

from my friend, but a letter, if possible. Daisy then asked me to get a book from the room behind us. I did so, taking up the first that came to hand, and which I placed in the medium's hand. He simply took it and placed it on a chair beside him, then took my two hands in his, held them for a short time, shuddered convulsively a few times and then asked me to see what was in the book. I opened the cover of the book and then found a letter dated and written in London that same evening in the well-known handwriting of my friend. I may add that my friend's handwriting is as familiar to me as my own, as we have been in constant correspondence ever since I returned to India, two years ago, and the subject-matter of the letter could not possibly have been written by any one except the writer. Moreover, in the letter, my friend states that "Ernest" (Mr. Eglinton's spirit-guide) was waiting while the letter was written and would bring it to me. Now here is a fact, account for it as we may, that letter written in London on the evening of Sunday, 20th November, 1881, was put into my hands in Calcutta at 11 P.M. of the self-same day, thus taking into account the difference in the time, having been transmitted from London to Calcutta almost instantaneously.

A day or so subsequent to this proceeding, Mr. Eglinton was again entranced and the spirit-friends told me through him that if I would identify a sheet of paper with some private mark and let the medium carry it in his pocket for a day or so to get it imbued with his magnetism, they would endeavour to take the same sheet of paper to my friend in London and return it to me filled with my friend's handwriting.

I took a sheet of foreign letter paper, marked it with my initials and a private mark in one corner, gave it to Mr. Eglinton and asked him to place it in his pocket book, which he did. On the evening of Saturday, 26th November, Mr. Eglinton and I dined with some friends at the Bengal Club, returning home about 11 P.M. Mr. Eglinton again asked me to sit with him for a time before going to bed. He then took from his pocket the sheet of paper I had previously marked, gave it to me to assure myself that it was the same sheet and then placed it in a book, which he then laid against the under-surface of the table. In a few seconds he handed me the book, which I carefully examined, but found no trace whatever of the sheet of paper. Mr. Eglinton requested me to hold the book and not take my hand from it and then in his normal state, proceeded to say that he saw his spirit-guide travel over land and sea until it reached my friend's place in London, and he proceeded to minutely describe my friend and the surroundings in the room, stated that the room was filled with spirit light, that he saw the spirit "Ernest" standing,

waiting while the letter was being written, and after sometime declared that he saw Ernest take the letter and return with it. He then asked me to look inside the book (of which I had carefully retained hold the whole time) and then inside the cover, sure enough, I found the self-same sheet of paper marked with my initials and private mark, completely filled with my friend's handwriting. In the letter, moreover, the writer states that it was written at the request of the spirit "Ernest" who stood waiting while the letter was written, that the room was lighted with spirit light, and that the sheet of paper on which the letter was written was brought by Ernest. Again I must repeat that my friend's handwriting is as familiar as my own, is peculiar hand, not easily imitated, that the subject-matter of the letter is such as none but the writer and myself could understand, and that the letter is headed and dated London, Saturday evening, 26th November, 1881. Thus in this second manifestation, which wonderfully corroborates the first, a sheet of paper was carried by spirit-power nearly 16,000 miles and was brought instantaneously, for, from the time the sheet of paper was taken until it was returned filled with my friend's writing, was scarcely more than would suffice for the writing of the letter. Surely facts such as these are worthy of the attention of all who are interested in the investigation of truth."

II

The following account written by Mrs. A. Gordon, wife of Col. Gordon of Howrah, appeared in the *Psychic Notes* of the 10th February, 1882 :

When relating anything which is likely to strike the public mind as even more impossible than the ordinary phenomena of the seance room, it is best to give to the narrative any strength which the name and position of writers or witnesses can afford. After a lengthened experience in these investigations, the impossible can scarcely be said to exist in the mind of the investigator, and I now well understand the feeling which called forth a remark from Colonel Greek, a Russian Engineer Officer, whom I met during the early days of my investigations, to the effect that he had expunged that word from his dictionary, knowing that the compiler was less able himself to define the impossible.

It is with a most comprehensive knowledge of the difficulties presented to the inexperienced mind, even when striving to be open to conviction, that I write of the marvellous phenomena which are certainties to me. Familiarity has not rendered these facts less wonderful, though, it has made me able to accept

the evidence of others in such matters of daily life. In the same way that a man who has never sent a telegram himself accepts unhesitatingly the word of a friend who has done so, so I can believe in some extraordinary phenomenon which I have not myself witnessed because I know such things are possible. The last number of "Psychic Notes" contained a letter from Mr. Meugens telling of the instantaneous transfer of a letter from London to Calcutta. He explained why the conditions were suitable for powerful manifestations, there being a medium at each end of the line of communication, and he being *en rapport* with both. This phenomenon has occurred several times, and of the last, I am permitted to publish more fully than of any former.

There is, in London, a gentleman named Arthur C. (without his permission I do not feel at liberty to give his full name) whom Mr. Meugens, when at home, saw a good deal of, and of whose mediumistic gifts he had many striking proofs. Mr. Meugens has corresponded with him since his return to India, and on January, the 12th received through the post a letter from him, in answer to one Mr. M. had written, announcing the safe arrival of Mr. Eglinton in India. The envelope and its enclosure are in my possession and establish the individuality of the writer and the fact of the letter having come through the post. The contents of this letter are of no importance having no bearing on the story I am telling. On Sunday, the 15th of January, Mr. Meugens and Mr. Eglinton dined with us and a seance was held after, which was almost a failure, though one striking phenomenon redeemed it from being quite so.

After returning home Mr. Meugens and Mr. Eglinton were sitting in the verandah having a cigar, when a small table near, began tilting, a familiar way the spirits have of attracting attention. Mr. Meugens asked who was there, when to his surprise the name of the spirit-guide of his friend, Mr. Arthur C, was spelt out. Mr. M. inquired the reason for his unexpected visit and had spelt out, "brought a letter". He then asked where he should find it, and began the alphabet getting as far as Z. He thought this was a joke, but the table gave the signal for him to go on, when he found the next letter to be I, then came TH, and he knew the word must be Zither. He asked if he was to look on the Zither, and was told "Yes". This instrument he had brought over to our house, and on his return had put it with the musical box on the table as he passed through to the verandah. He went into the room and there, on the Zither, he found an open and unfinished letter in unmistakeable handwriting of his friend in London. The contents of this letter I give :

"My dear friend,—I am wondering how you are getting on with your sittings. I often wish I could be with you ; however, I suppose you will soon be leaving for England. It is horribly cold here, and pretty nearly pitch dark, although it is not quite 5 O'clock ; rather different to your side of the world I expect. Do you know I've been looking into a crystal this afternoon, which belongs to a friend of mine, just for fun, for I don't think they are of much use ; however, to my surprise I saw you and Eglinton sitting under a sort of verandah. Well then that faded away, then I saw the name of "Gordon". I put a good deal to imagination, as I've been thinking a good deal of you, tho' I can't account for the name, I wonder, when"

Here the letter ends, the last words begin a new-paragraph until the mail comes we cannot hear anything further. The writing of the two letters in my possession are so identical that no one looking at them can doubt their being penned by the same person, (1) and one of these certainly came by post, the letter and envelope bearing the same date. Now realizing as I do the absolute impossibility this phenomenon presents to most minds, I will nevertheless try to show the difficulties which have to be overcome when the only other theories, namely, fraud and collusion, are considered. Everybody who knows Mr. Meugens will certainly exonerate him from all suspicion of conspiring to palm off a lie on the public, and therefore, there is only Mr. Eglinton and the gentleman medium at home who could be suspected as guilty of such a thing. This supposes that Mr. Eglinton early in October got the friend of Mr. Meugens at home to write a letter with the view of deceiving a good man, and his own friend, and for what purpose? Bad as mankind is supposed to be, we do not look for fraud and deceit where no motive exists for such, and the tone of the letter dated London, December 10th, proves he values the friendship of Mr. Meugens. Of the two theories both are equally improbable ; it cannot be supposed that Mr. Meugens would lend himself to a deliberate fraud and that he received both letters at once, he and his friend at home having concocted this phenomenon, and it is almost equally difficult to suppose that Mr. Eglinton so

¹ There being no professional expert in Calcutta, I obtained through the kindness of a friend in the foreign office, the opinion of a gentleman in that department, who is always referred to when any such opinion is required.

² The other letter bears date 15th January, and being written at about 5 O'clock, which, allowing for difference of time, would be the hour at which it appeared here. The name of "Gordon" is easily accounted for, as Mr. Eglinton and Mr. Meugens were with us during the hours which would have been the afternoon in England. They left us about 11 O'clock at night, and it was soon after they got home that the letter came.

long ago as October arranged this little plot with the man in London. The paper, crest and handwriting leaving no doubt of the letters being by the same person, and the envelope matches the paper and has the same crest. I can safely say that no two letters of mine would bear such striking similarity in every way. I have these letters and have shown them to several people and shall be glad to show them to anyone else. I have written to the gentleman from whom this letter came to ask him under what circumstances it disappeared. I ought to have an answer about the middle of March. I do not know Mr. Arthur C. but believe his family very much, object to his mediumistic faculty being exercised, except among chosen friends. He is not in any sense a paid medium, as far as I can learn, having a small income of his own and residing with his mother. Therefore, the reader of this extraordinary story must bear in mind that were it not that the phenomenon itself presents insuperable difficulties, he would not, in the circumstances related, see any reason for a fraudulent conspiracy on the part of the persons concerned. As I have often said before, I fully realize, and sympathize with, the extreme difficulty the vast majority must have in even imagining such a phenomenon true, and yet experience in such matters has made me able to accept as circumstantially proved the story I have related. If a man, who had proved the existence of telegraphic communication between London and Brighton, were told that on the same principle communication had been established between London and India, he would find no difficulty in believing it, though the sea and a greater distance intervened. So it is in this case ; I have had conclusive proof of similar phenomena, and can accept this on the evidence before me, and while admitting that such things cannot be easily believed in, I would ask even the most sceptical to bear in mind that it is at least an uncharitable as well as unreasonable verdict to arrive at, that we, who affirm these facts, are composed of rogues and fools. We were not brought up to believe in miracles of this kind anyhow, and have nothing to gain, by showing a too easy credence in such matters. We do not think we shall save our souls by our belief or that it makes much difference individually, except as an intellectual gain. Though we may be convinced of the existence of spirits able and willing to do these manifestations, we do not look upon them as authorities for our guidance, at least the most intelligent spiritualists do not. We still believe in reason as a guide, though we would gain all attainable knowledge to assist us in using that gift.

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